

**STATE OF IOWA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
IOWA UTILITIES BOARD**

IN RE:)	
INVESTIGATION INTO A)	DOCKET NO. INU-2021-0001
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR IOWA’S)	
TRANSMISSION GRID OF THE FUTURE)	

Comments from ratepayer and Iowa Taxpayer Michael Deutmeyer

On July 2, 2021, the Iowa Utilities Board issued an order opening an investigation in this docket that requested ITC Midwest LLC, and other entities, to submit information regarding its transmission planning. Specifically, the Board requested “written comments, information in regard to their current overall plan, and proposals for a joint overall plan.” In the Order, the Board also stated concerns with the “increasing prevalence of single-purpose [transmission] lines in Iowa” that have “created a spider web of lengthy transmission lines that serve a limited purpose — carrying solar and wind energy to market — for the benefit of a limited number of Iowans, if any at all.” The board also states that “generation in Iowa now exceeds the amount needed for Iowans. Iowa has become a net exporter of electric energy and the rewards of renewable energy have not led to lower energy costs. In fact, the loss of prime farmland and infringement upon landowner use and enjoyment of their land are factors that continue to be raised by local governments, landowners, and residents in Iowa. Iowa’s increased desire to reduce carbon and improve the types of generation that reduce carbon may require a different approach to transmission projects.”

I appreciate the Board’s attempt to create an electric generation and transmission plan. The seemingly endless barrage of projects in consideration is overwhelming to most. It is difficult to even

begin to guess what our state will look like years in the future.

I also believe that the Iowa Utilities Board is asking the wrong question within their filing. Rather than asking where, when and how, I believe the Board should be asking **why**. As stated in their comments, the Board concedes to the fact that “generation in Iowa now exceeds the amount needed for Iowans”. Why are we in the State of Iowa concerned with overproducing energy when the only option is to export it. I will assume that the companies involved with creating the generation and transmission projects will say those projects pump millions into Iowa’s economy through jobs and localized spending, etc., but when is the impact of such projects really going to begin to have an effect on all Iowans? The opportunity to create a positive financial impact on every rate paying Iowan is real. Why are Iowans not seeing savings when they open up their electricity bills? I would guess that within the next 10 years every Iowan will be able to see a windfarm, solar farm or a transmission line from their front doorstep. That is the cost Iowans have paid, and as of today they have gotten nothing in return other than a ruined view. Also stated in their filing “The Board considers it important to include the two investor-owned transmission companies, MidAmerican Energy Company and ITC Midwest LLC, and rural electric cooperatives, municipal electric utilities, and independent power producers in the discussion.” Why are these entities really invited to decide on the transmission grid of the future? I understand that these companies are the ones creating the electric system we see today, but the bottom line is most of these people have no interest in anything other than literally covering every inch of the state in a solar farm, wind farm or a transmission easement. That’s what they do, and with a guaranteed rate of return, I can understand why. Why are we assuming that the energy grid of the future will use the same style of mega generation that it does today?

At a recent Eminent Domain hearing for the Cardinal Hickory Creek Transmission project at the Hotel Julien in December of 2019, an official from ITC was asked how locations are chosen for which to site a windfarm. His response "...I believe there was also consideration of gas lines in the area so that if potentially in the future there could be gas turbines that would supplement the big wind farms."

(Cardinal Hickory Creek Docket E-22386, Transcripts Volume 1, January 8, 2020, pg. 93 line 18)

It seems as though the companies creating the system know that (at least) generation will change in the future, though today they diligently work to cover the state with windfarms.

Why doesn't Iowa continue to be a cutting edge leader in alternative energy? Why don't we look further into the future? Why don't we consider a goal of exporting all of our current green energy to other states. It could be possible to create a system of local non transmission alternatives. Why don't we stop lining the pockets of out of state firms, investment groups and lawyers and really develop a system where Iowa's ratepayers have an opportunity to save money. Why don't we allow more *local* alternative energy companies to emerge and supply solar systems or wind systems to the citizens of the state? A number of years ago I looked into solar panels for my farm. I spend over \$12,000.00 a year on electricity cost. The system was going to cost \$90,000.00, 50% of the cost would have been subsidized leaving me to spend \$45,000.00 out of pocket. The savings from a lower electric bill would have been about \$3,600.00 per year. That poor return is not something most Iowans can justify. However, with more competition in the marketplace and a state that invests in their citizens rather than out of state mega corporations, those numbers could be made to look very justifiable for the majority. I believe that no Iowan wants to see an out of state company build a 100 acre solar farm next door, but I believe every Iowan would like to see 100 neighbors with solar panels on their roofs. I don't want to see a windfarm in my neighborhood, but I would be very

open to my rural neighbor installing a wind turbine to help himself financially and do his part for the greater good of the environment.

I truly believe the majority of us want the same things: to do our part to protect the environment, to have a reliable electricity supply, and to save a meaningful amount of money along the way without offending our neighbor. The only difference between the way things are today and where they could be in the future is a matter of who feels good about themselves at the end of the day, big business or Iowans.

Michael Deutmeyer