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Minnkota's Project Tundra is a bad investment for electric co-op member-owners

Montevideo, MN, September 29, 2020 – There are serious financial concerns with Minnkota Electric Cooperative's proposed Project Tundra at its Milton R. Young coal plant in Center, ND. The Institute on Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) found that Project Tundra could cost rural electric co-op member-owners hundreds of millions in a new report "Project Tundra: A Step in the Wrong Direction."

Project Tundra is a carbon capture utilization and sequestration (CCUS or CCS) project. CCS technology claims to remove carbon from coal plant exhaust and then either sequester it underground in geologic formations or utilize it for "enhanced oil recovery," more plainly known as fracking with carbon. This experimental project is only the third of its kind in the entire world. Minnkota plans to use federal tax credit, known as 45Q, to help finance the project. Project Tundra has already received \$46 million in funds from the US Department of Energy and the state of North Dakota.

There are many serious concerns with Project Tundra. This project is expensive and relies on unproven technology. Possible problems identified by the IEEFA report range from high electricity rates for electric co-op member-owners to uncertainty about carbon leaks.

"Sinking billions of dollars into an untested pipe dream on an already expensive coal plant just isn't fair to electric co-op member-owners who will pay the bill," said Erik Hatlestad, Energy Democracy Program Director at CURE, "the only thing this will accomplish is signing up member-owners for expensive coal power for decades to come and stripping billions of dollars out of rural communities into the hands of Minnkota's bankers."

Read the entire report here:

https://ieefa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Project-Tundra_A-Step-in-the-Wrong-Direction_September-2020.pdf

CURE is a rural peoples' organization with offices in Montevideo, Minnesota. CURE's Energy Democracy Program has been critical of certain rural electric cooperative governance practices

and has recently released reports such as [The Rural Electric Cooperative Scorecard](#) and [Rural Electrification 2.0](#). With a focus on strategies to impact climate, energy, and environmental justice, the Energy Democracy Program strives to build grassroots community power to address the linkages between environmental challenges, societal inequities, and other systemic challenges facing our communities. Visit www.cureriver.org to learn more about the recent report on Project Tundra.

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