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Revised Global Warming Bill PSC Uses “New Math” in Cost Analysis

As noted in our last Hot Air Report, Democrats introduced their “revised” Global Warming bill Tuesday afternoon. Make no mistake, the bill is still a disaster for ratepayers. Not only were the revisions crafted in secret, they were introduced just nine days before the last day of the legislative session, leaving the public and legislators little time to review the new language.

The following day, the Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC) released its economic analysis of the revised bill. Although the PSC is supposed to be a non-partisan state agency, it endorsed the revisions, stating “...*the remaining components continue to represent sound energy and economic policy for Wisconsin.*”

The PSC clearly had access to the bill well before the public. Did Democrats work hand-in-hand with the PSC to draft this legislation, to ensure the PSC’s analysis would indicate a savings to ratepayers? Or, did the Democrats draft the language independently and wait to release it until the PSC produced a favorable analysis? Does the fact that the PSC’s Chairman was listed as a host for a recent fundraiser for the Democrat’s gubernatorial candidate raise any conflict of interest issues?

The agency’s continued endorsement of this legislation and its analysis that the bill will save ratepayer money stretches the credibility of its economic judgment. In our next Hot Air Report, we will examine the results of similar legislation in other states. Minnesota passed a 25% by 2025 mandate in 2007 and one of its utilities recently filed for a 19% rate hike. Los Angeles’ even higher mandates are causing a rate crisis.

Yet the PSC still insists similar measures in Wisconsin will save ratepayer money. How is this possible when the 25% renewable mandate alone is estimated to require utilities to spend at least \$15 billion on new infrastructure, and will not result in the shutdown of any coal plants? And the PSC doesn’t explain how the goal of reducing Wisconsin’s energy usage by 2% per year by 2015 will create new jobs. Historically the only time energy use in Wisconsin has gone down by that amount has been in recessions.

I shudder to think what our economy will look like by 2025 if our electric usage is declining at a rate of 2% every year. Our state’s economy desperately needs growth and job creation, not stagnation and an enforced decrease in electric usage. Should we be willing to dramatically alter our state’s economy to satisfy Madison’s liberal elites?

With only one week remaining in the session, now is the time to contact your Legislators and let them know you oppose this bill (AB 649). It’s also a good idea to call your friends and relatives in other parts of the state and make sure they are aware of this bill, especially if they are represented by Democrats. They can find out who their representatives are at www.legis.wisconsin.gov, under the link “*Who Represents Me.*”

Access all my reports online, at: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/assembly/asm23/news/media.htm>.