



WESTERN RESOURCE
ADVOCATES



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Groups hail PUC approval of Xcel's resource plan

Focus on efficiency, renewable energy will protect climate and public health, and insulate ratepayers from risks of fossil fuel electric generation

DENVER – State and national conservation groups are applauding a precedent-setting decision today by the Colorado Public Utilities Commission to approve Xcel Energy's plans to cut CO2 emissions by retiring two aging coal-fired power plants and focusing on intense development of efficiency and renewables.

“This is a pioneering decision by the PUC,” said John Nielsen, the energy program director at Western Resource Advocates. “It clears the way for Xcel to put into action what is arguably the most innovative utility resource plan anywhere in the country, and it will only strengthen Colorado's status as a clean energy leader.”

Today's order issued by the PUC marks the first time ever that a regulatory agency in the United States has approved a utility resource plan to retire old and inefficient coal-fired power plants and replace them with cleaner, more modern resources with the goal of cutting global warming pollution.

PUCs are charged with making sure that electrical generation and transmission facilities operate in the public's best interest by providing electricity that is reliable and making certain that customers are charged reasonable and affordable rates. Along with the power plant closings, Xcel's plan calls for adding at least 1,000 megawatts of new wind and solar power to its portfolio and dramatically increasing its investments in energy efficiency.

“Because of this decision, Coloradans will benefit now from investments in efficiency and in the long run from more renewables,” said Keith Hay, energy advocate at Environment Colorado. “Clean energy is both affordable and reliable electricity, plus it has the added benefits of cutting carbon emissions, protecting public health by dramatically reducing pollution and bolstering economic development and job creation.”

As a result of the PUC approval, Xcel can begin to officially put its plans into action.

“The nation is looking for leadership on energy and climate issues, and we now have it with this landmark shift to clean energy,” said Dan Grossman, Rocky Mountain regional director of Environmental Defense Fund and former majority leader in the Colorado Senate. “Xcel’s commitment to cutting global warming pollution will grow our economy, allowing us to power our homes and businesses with clean, American energy that secures a safe future for our families.”

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