

Tips and talking points for making a public comment during the KY Public Service Commission's public meetings on the Big Sandy Power plant

Background:

In order to comply with new clean air standards by 2015, American Electric Power has put forth a request to the Kentucky Public Service Commission to shut down their coal-burning Big Sandy power plant. Originally, AEP had requested to retrofit the Big Sandy plant with pollution controls at the cost of nearly \$1 billion in order to keep producing coal power at that location. They withdrew that request in May. Now, the proposal on which the Public Service Commission is taking comments consists of shutting down the Big Sandy plant and spending \$536 million to buy a 50% share in a coal-burning power plant in West Virginia. This is estimated to raise utility bills by 8%.

These are not the only choices that should be put before Kentucky Power customers and eastern Kentuckians. There is a better way. Eastern Kentuckians deserve a plan that will build a bright future and provide a just transition.

For more background info & sources on the tips and talking points below, please visit www.kftc.org/renew-big-sandy

Tips for speaking at the public meeting:

- Arrive early. You can help set the a positive and solutions-oriented tone for the rest of the comments if you sign-up early and are one of the first to speak.
- Understand that many people attending the meetings will be very concerned about the economic disruption and job loss that will occur based on the two proposals currently available. Many will want the jobs at the Big Sandy power plant to remain & believe that closing the plant will be detrimental to the community. These are very real concerns and should be acknowledged and addressed. However, this is why it is important to note that AEP and the PSC are presenting us with a false choice (see below) and why it is important to promote a solution that builds a strong community, improves public health, *and* creates good local jobs.

Talking points:

Here are both some points you might make during a public comment, as well as a suggested order for your comment, as this framework can help stimulate positive conversation during the meeting:

I am a Kentuckian...

Start by sharing a little bit about yourself. Your name, a little about who you are or your background. This will help the Commission & the audience in the room see you as a real person and relate to you & your comment.

We all value / we all want...

Share something that you believe everyone in the room can get behind. For this issue, here are some suggestions of things that you--that we all--value:

Strong communities, where we have plenty of good jobs, good health, clean water, where we can afford basic needs like our power bills.

Vision of a bright future

Paint a picture of what the future in the area / region would be like if AEP and the Public Service Commission made all the best choices. Maybe something like:

I am speaking up today because I believe we can have a bright future if we make the right choices and we work for it. I believe we can have a strong local economy powered by solar and hydroelectric and other clean sources of energy, that workers can have jobs helping make energy upgrades to homes. Etc...

We are in an important moment but are being presented with a false choice

The new clean air standards are coming and AEP must do something to meet them. This is an important moment of choice for the power company; the choice they make, and that the Public Service Commission allows them to make, will have deep and long-lasting effects on our region.

However, what has been presented to us is a false choice. We do not need to choose between shutting down the plant while spending more than half a billion dollars to ship the jobs to another state or paying almost double that, while significantly raising our rates, to keep the jobs burning coal at the Big Sandy plant. There is a better way.

Eastern Kentuckians deserve a bright future and a just transition

For decades American Electric Power has made enormous profit from the hard work, the people, the infrastructure, and the public health of our communities and region. As AEP is looking to transition to producing electricity in less harmful ways, the corporation has a moral obligation to the region to invest in good jobs that will increase public health and make our communities stronger. AEP can:

- **create good, local jobs as well as meet their energy demands and our energy needs through local and regional energy efficiency and renewable energy projects**

A study in 2009 in Kentucky stated that a program of energy efficiency and local renewable energy generation could create thousands more jobs than building and running a new coal-burning power plant, and at a lower cost. If AEP were serious about working to save their customers energy and save money on their bills, and getting a much larger percentage of their power from clean sources, they could put thousands of people to work throughout their service area at jobs that can't be outsourced.

- **develop land remediation programs and jobs in the eastern Kentucky region**

AEP can hire local workers to clean up the site at the Big Sandy plant once it is decommissioned. AEP can also train and hire workers to improve abandoned mine lands in the area where the coal was mined that supplied the plant for decades.

- **provide job training and transition for laid-off plant employees**

AEP owes it to the workers at the plant and the community to provide good benefits and job training for the workers at the plant.

- **develop a community fund or foundation that will pay to create jobs right here in our region**

The Public Service Commission needs to look into requiring that AEP use the sulfur dioxide pollution credits they will be saving with the closure of the power plant to invest in the community, rather than to line the pockets of the share holders. AEP can create a fund with these credits that they sell on the market which in turn can be used to create the new jobs listed above and other local economic opportunities. The PSC and AEP should research the model of the Mohave coal-burning power plant on the Navajo reservation in New Mexico. The Public Service Commission was a key decision maker in that deal, and the local communities are now looking forward to a just transition with the shut down of the local power plant and coal mine.

We have an opportunity to continue this conversation & work together to make it happen

For those of us who will be left here with the consequences no matter what the PSC chooses, now is the time to come together to talk about what we want for our community, to plan together how we can have good health and good jobs. We all have some values in common; we have many great ideas together. Let's make them happen.