

Say No to Appalachian Power Rate Increases!

On Thursday, March 31, 2011, Appalachian Power Company met with the Southwest Virginia delegation of state House and Senate members in Wytheville, VA. Company representatives informed the delegation that APCO would be submitting to the State Corporation Commission four rate increase requests totaling 9.6%. If approved by the State Corporation Commission on December 1, 2011, the increase would go in to effect on February 1, 2012. The company attributes the majority of the rate increases (80%) to federal environmental mandates. I made it very clear to APCO's President, Charles Patton that I oppose any rate increase and encouraged the company to take a more proactive approach in opposing federal environmental mandates. I have made all attempts within my legislative power at the state level over the past two years to urge the United States Congress to address the extreme actions of President Obama and federal agencies such as the EPA. My question to our President, Congressmen and Senators is, what happened to common sense in this country? I often hear politicians discuss the issue of job creation and energy, but there is often no significant substance to what many of our law makers are discussing or proposing. Our country has shifted from having one of the most industrious manufacturing economies in the world to a service based economy that has become increasingly dependent on foreign interests. The United States must move toward a common sense energy approach by focusing on self-sustainability, de-regulating extreme environmental mandates, better utilizing our vast natural resources, and reducing our dependency on foreign sources of energy. Energy will be one of the leading issues that we face over the next several years. Drastic measures must be taken now by our state and federal representatives to address our energy crises because the citizens of this nation can no longer afford more regulation. I receive phone calls from constituents pleading for help because they can no longer afford to pay for food, fuel, and medication. I urge our law makers to seek action and take a common sense approach toward energy and commerce because for the less fortunate and the elderly, it is now a matter of survival. In regard to state utility regulation, enough is not being done to address the State Corporation Commission's careless approval of utility rate increases. Most proposals made by democrats and republicans in the Virginia House of Delegates and Senate to address utility rate regulation have been made simply for political gain and would not provide long-term rate relief for Virginia residents. Over the next several weeks I will be working with republican and democratic lawmakers to help craft a real solution for our residents, such as introducing legislation to hold the State Corporation Commission officers accountable to the residents by electing the commission members, and creating a competitive environment for Appalachian Power. Appalachian Power is currently a monopoly in Virginia, therefore competition must be provided to ensure lower utility rates. President Obama and other law makers claim the answer to reducing fuel prices is to call for increased investments in renewable energy, but the real truth is there is a hidden agenda to kill the coal industry. I have made energy one of my leading priorities over the past two years because it is the only real solution to significant job creation within our region. I have traveled all across the country and worked with dozens of leading energy experts and companies to fully understand both renewable and non-renewable energy. The simple reality is green energy is not an affordable form energy. Lobbyist that represent the renewable energy sector (wind, solar, etc.) are not afraid to admit the hidden agenda to kill the coal industry is in order to make renewable energy more competitive with coal and natural gas. Over the next several months citizens will hear political operatives mention that the coal business is doing very well. This may be true, but only for operations with existing permits. I work daily with

companies desperately seeking help with new coal permits, but the reality is the EPA is not issuing new permits in a timely manner with many taking several years and some never being permitted. The President claims there is not a solution to reducing fuel prices, but there is a solution by doing away with overbearing federal regulations and giving free enterprise the opportunity to drill in the United States and utilize the resources we have available. For example, there is no excuse the residents of Southwest Virginia do not have the opportunity to utilize the regions natural resources that are currently being exported, such as natural gas to heat homes and fuel vehicles. As I have mentioned before, these are not republican or democrat issues, but quality of life issues. My record in the General Assembly proves that I do not vote solely with the Republican party and I take pride in voting the way I believe best represents the citizens of Southwest Virginia. The American people are reaching a point of frustration where they can no longer afford to provide for themselves or their families! To oppose the Appalachian Power rate increase, please go to YesCoal.org or call my office and show your support for the fuel that provides America with cheap energy and join me as we tell Richmond and Washington, D.C. that we can no longer tolerate more regulation on the coal industry, which ultimately results in higher utility rates. As always, if I can ever be of assistance to you or your family, please contact me at (276)345-4300.

Sincerely,

Will Morefield

Member, Virginia House of Delegates