

05/15/2024

Dear Commissioners,

As a concerned member of the public, and a CenterPoint customer, I urge your attention to the critical issue of greenhouse gas emissions stemming from Minnesota's buildings sector.

Shockingly, 26% of these emissions are attributed to this sector alone. With such a significant environmental footprint, it is imperative that CenterPoint Energy's Innovation Plan addresses this pressing concern with real solutions, not strategies that make expensive investments in an aging system that props up an industry in need of transformation.

Here are my concerns with the plan:

1. No Clear Strategy for Greenhouse Gas Reduction
  - There is no overarching goal and strategy for reaching state GHG reduction goals.
  - CenterPoint Energy should articulate clear GHG reduction goals in their plan.
  - The proposed portfolio lacks clarity on objectives, scalability, and GHG reduction potential, focusing more on diversity rather than effectiveness.
  
2. Too Much Investment in Hydrogen and Renewable Natural Gas
  - The plan fails to reserve renewable natural gas (RNG), biogas, and hydrogen for hard-to-decarbonize sectors, and instead proposes they be used in scenarios where real solutions, like electrification, weatherization, and geothermal are possible.
  - Blending hydrogen into the existing natural gas system may delay electrification and pose safety risks, since our pipes were not built to transport hydrogen.
  - RNG should be approached with caution due to limited availability, high costs, and environmental concerns.
  
3. Underutilization of Electrification, Energy Efficiency, and Geothermal Resources
  - CenterPoint Energy's plan should better reflect the importance of strategic electrification, energy efficiency, and networked geothermal systems in meeting GHG reduction targets.

4. Funding of Gas-Fired Appliances and Carbon Offsets
  - Funding gas-fired appliances when more efficient electric alternatives are available contradicts the aim of reducing GHG emissions.
  - Carbon offsets should not be included in NGIA plans as they do not directly reduce emissions from local distribution systems.
  
5. Insufficient Prioritization of Projects Benefiting Low-Income and Disadvantaged Communities
  - Low-income communities and communities of color suffer disproportionately from poor air quality and high energy burdens, necessitating targeted investments.
  - CenterPoint's NGIA portfolio should better prioritize projects like beneficial electrification and energy conservation, that address health disparities and minimize bill increases for vulnerable populations.

In conclusion, we implore the commissioners to carefully scrutinize CenterPoint Energy's proposed portfolio with a lens focused on genuine progress toward greenhouse gas reduction.

The urgency of the climate crisis demands swift and decisive action, and CenterPoint's plan must align with this imperative by prioritizing solutions such as electrification, energy efficiency, and geothermal resources. Failure to do so not only jeopardizes the state's ability to meet its emission reduction goals but also perpetuates inequities and health disparities within our communities.

Now is the time for bold and forward-thinking strategies that prioritize the planet and its people above all else. Thank you.

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