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Agenda Item 120170 September 10, 2010 Interruptible Electric Power

Comment by Dian Deevey

GRU has done a magnificent job of reducing retail electricity consumption through its many conservation programs. These programs reduce the total amount of electricity retail customers use throughout the day and year. Some of these programs will reduce peak demands through 2032.

There are a number of other kinds of demand side management programs that utilities adopt to save themselves very large amounts of money. These are "load management" programs that delay adding new generators by reducing the peak load. They accomplish this by shifting some energy usage away from the time of the peak load, or reducing some kinds of demand when the utility has a high load. Interruptible power is a load management technique used by FPL, Progress Energy, and some municipal utilities in Florida.

Many kinds of load control programs are widely used by utilities. For example, some utilities offer attractive rates in return for the right to turn off a customer's air conditioning for brief periods on hot summer days. Typically, the utility will turn AC off for 15 minutes twice an hour until the temperature declines and with it the total load on the utility. GRU's interruptible power doesn't operate like this, but the basic idea is the same.

Reducing a peak load with a load management program will delay the costs of adding generating capacity.

But GRU has plenty of extra capacity so it is logical that it is not interested in retaining an interruptible power program. GRU has never asked its large users to reduce electricity consumption.

The fact that GRU doesn't need load management is evidence that it doesn't need any new generators now, and certainly not a 100 MW one. If it were to adopt sensible load management programs, GRU would not need a new generator until Deerhaven 2 is retired in 2032.

The City should cancel that biomass plant and start planning new load management programs now.