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Keep This Number

When reporting an outage, an automated outage reporting system may answer your call. It may ask for your 12-digit number to help locate the outage site. This number is found on your monthly bill. It's handy to write it down and keep it near the phone.

Suggestions

Please send your *Country Living* story ideas or comments to the attention of Lisa R. Hooker at South Central's Lancaster office.

South Central Power Company

A Touchstone EnergySM Cooperative 

Electricity issues must be part of climate change debate

Pressure is mounting in Congress to address climate change. And while political debates in Washington, D.C. may seem far away, the outcome will have a direct impact on South Central Power - and on you, as an electric consumer.

Articles in last month's *Country Living* outlined various aspects of climate change. More articles can be expected in the future, as various proposals are presented and debated.

It appears Congressional desire to quickly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the growing consumer demand for power are on a collision course.

To the limit. Climate change is but one aspect of a looming energy crisis created by increasing electric usage by Americans and decreasing electric capacity to meet their demand.

The Energy Information Administration projects electricity usage will increase 30 percent by 2030. This is an amount equivalent to adding four more Californias.

Annual household electric usage is up eight percent nationally in the last decade, despite efficiency gains in appliances and consumer conservation efforts.

Growth in consumer power usage has the real potential to stretch our nation's electric system to its limits. A 2007 study by the North American Electric Reliability Council, the nation's official reliability monitor, found consumer demand for electricity will outstrip electric capacity in some regions of the country in the next few years unless new generation and transmission facilities are added or upgraded.

A real risk. Right now, Congress is hearing from a broad spectrum of interest groups, and much of the climate change debate is centered solely on the environment. While members of those various interest groups are well-versed in a particular area of expertise, they may not be aware of how their ideas and timelines would impact the electric industry and consumers' electric bills.

As lawmakers review the climate change proposals, they are not spending much time considering how to maintain an adequate energy supply for the American economy.

The U.S. Department of Energy forecasts U.S. economic growth will drive a 17 percent increase in electricity between 2006 and 2020. That equates to an additional 118,000 megawatts of power.

The bottom line? The capacity to generate enough electricity to fuel economic growth and meet consumers growing use is in jeopardy. This is true not only for cooperative consumers, but also for all electric consumers.

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Electricity and climate change

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Electric cooperatives also believe Congress is overlooking the economic impact the various proposals will have on customers pocketbooks.

Because of how the proposals would affect electric utilities, the cost of climate change legislation will show up as significantly higher electric bills for customers at the end of the line.

The clock is ticking. Electric cooperatives wholeheartedly support consumer conservation and energy efficiency measures. Both are topics we address regularly and knowledgeably with our consumers and communities.

We recognize renewable energy and alternative energy must be part of the nation's energy mix. South Central Power, Ohio Rural Electric Cooperatives, Inc. and electric co-ops across the country are involved in a number of initiatives.

What's missing from the debate, however, is a realistic view of renewable energy's contribution *in light of* the immediacy of growing consumer usage and diminishing electric capacity.

Considering the decades-long timeframe necessary to build a baseload power plant or upgrade transmission capabilities, energy efficiency and renewable energy by themselves do not solve the immediate issues of increasing consumer electric usage and shrinking capacity.

Governmental leadership needed. To avert an energy crisis, the federal government must exercise true leadership. We believe America needs a plan that addresses today's energy requirements *and* the environmental concerns associated with climate change.

Without a sound, responsible plan, our government is not only jeopardizing the reliability of our electric system, but also the ability of many Americans to afford electricity.

Every viewpoint has a right to be heard, but no one - except the electric industry - is talking about the impact the current proposals will have on electric consumers.

While some may dismiss our urgency and warnings, electric cooperatives know we are ultimately responsible to those we serve, our members.

No matter how unpopular our position may be, we have a responsibility to alert our consumers to legislation that could harm their

access to reliable electricity and their ability to afford it.

We're sounding the call and encouraging you, our members, to contact your elected officials. Now.

Starting a dialogue. It's not necessary to be an energy expert to ask questions. Asking hard questions is the only way to find realistic solutions to the challenge of balancing environmental concerns with keeping your lights on and your electric bills affordable.

Electric cooperatives have developed a website, www.ourenergy.coop, that will send your legislators a pre-written email on your behalf.

The email asks your representatives in Washington a series of questions that co-ops believe are worth asking and answering honestly.

- 1. Experts say that our nation's growing electric needs will soon go well beyond what renewables, conservation and efficiency*

alone can provide. What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future?

- 2. What are you doing to fully fund the research required to make emissions-free electric plants an affordable reality?*

- 3. Balancing electricity needs and environmental goals will be difficult. How much is all of this going to increase my electric bill and what will you do to make it affordable?*

If you do not have email, we encourage you to return the postcard that was inserted in last month's *Country Living*. If that postcard is no longer handy or you need additional ones for family and friends, visit your local South Central Power office.

We're in this together. It's been said that energy may be the issue of the 21st century. It goes beyond Republican, Democrat, and Independent labels. It affects conservatives, moderates and liberals alike.

South Central Power believes productive dialogue begins by asking tough questions and requiring straight answers from our elected officials. It is not unreasonable for lawmakers to have workable answers to these questions before *any* climate change law is passed now or in the future.

Help your electric cooperative start this important dialogue with our elected officials. Send an email or postcard today.



Our Energy, Our Future A Dialogue With America