

For some time I've wondered at the number of small hydro dams being destroyed for no good reason. The present push to shove a large gas pipeline into N.H. strikes me as more than a coincidence. We have PSNH trying to avoid having to do business with small, independent power producers, and, a large pipeline company working to drive a pipe to the east coast for export of gas and condensates.

PSNH wants its economies of scale. That is a given. It is using a period of time when America has a lot of available energy to try to shut down what it regards as nuisances. N.H. required PSNH to do business with these small sources to build resilience and independence into the system. While that is good for N.H., PSNH only cares about what is good for PSNH. That makes them want fewer suppliers and a simpler business model. As there is less pressure on the Legislature at this time to secure our energy independence, PSNH regards the time as ripe.

We are told that we must have more electrical generating capacity. We are told that there were shortfalls. Yet we, as a state, are a net exporter of electrical energy. We should consider the reasons for those shortfalls.

At the time when "there was a shortage of gas" and generators were having to buy off the spot market, the incoming pipeline was running at only 75% of capacity. This points to poor planning by the generators and poor management of the existing pipeline. It also points to poor storage. Liberty gas has published a document that shows that of the new capacity it intends to get from the southern N.H. spur, 50% will go to replace gas lost to storage leaks in Nashua, and, 37% will go to replace gas lost to leaks in Manchester. To allow these people more gas to dump into the atmosphere as an alternative to repairing their leaks is unthinkable. For them it's cheaper to buy than repair. Their leaks are adding more greenhouse gas than any coal plant. Thus, their proposal for a new spur to replenish what they waste is just like a drunk who wishes to lie under the spigot and drink what he wishes from a stream that is mostly wasted. Liberty should be prohibited from any new sources of gas until they repair their existing leaks.

Due to the use of an air conditioner, my electrical use doubled this billing cycle. My cost did not. The net effect is that the more one uses, the less, proportionately, one pays. There was a time when this sales model sort of made sense. Today, it no longer does. Rather than maintain the current practice of charging a baseline fee for the customer being connected to the grid, we should roll that fee into the price per KWH. Further, the practice of discounting electricity by volume used should be reversed for residential customers. Consider it a form of rationing by cost level. After consuming a reasonable number of KWHs per month, further consumption by a customer should be at progressively higher rates. Most customers are cost conscious. Those who make responsible use will pay less per KWH by staying within the base rate. Those who waste the most will pay the most. Industrial / commercial users could be kept on the old model or a modification of the new one. Rule making could provide protection / discounts to medical patients. The wastrels / conspicuous consumers would justifiably pay for their excess consumption. Such pricing structure should produce significant reductions in waste. Naturally, reducing waste should eliminate the need for rapid construction of new generating capacity. It would also lower the demand for new gas.

Additionally, slowing the rush to new construction would allow the state time to construct rules to favor small producers of hydro power and other distributed generation capacity. Tax credits could be provided to those who build small hydro dams or flow diverters to power smaller generators.

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