

August 15, 2012

I am Melissa Maher, the General Manager of Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative. More important, I am also a member and ratepayer of Moreau-Grand Electric. Our headquarters are in Timber Lake, SD. Moreau-Grand Electric serves 6,600 meters to 3,800 members with 6,950 square miles of territory within Corson, Dewey and Ziebach counties. Our service territory is within the boundaries of both the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe reservations. We serve some the poorest counties in the nation (in fact all three of our counties were ranked within the top 11 lowest per capita income per county in the nation in the 2010 census). Moreau-Grand Electric goes on the record as having the lowest MWH usage per mile of line in the State of SD as well as the lowest usage per residential meter in the State.

This statistical information is shared in order to create a vivid picture of Moreau-Grand's membership. The plan outlined by Secretary Chu would force PMA's to implement policies that would increase rates to our members thus creating undue burden. The current hydro-power system which I deem a renewable source of energy has been reliable and cost effective for years. The relationship established between WAPA, Basin Electric and the distribution cooperatives has served our members well. Through cost based rates, our members have paid for facilities and infrastructure, how could anyone then expect our members to give up the rights to these facilities they paid for? I liken this to the farmers and ranchers who has worked hard and sacrificed in order to pay for their land over several generations, only to have a complete bystander come along and takeover thus reaping the benefit.

The DOE should have experienced an eye-opener during this public input process. Many of the issues brought up in Secretary Chu's memo are already being practiced by distribution co-ops throughout the region, i.e. smart meters, smart technology, load control, and renewable energy.

It is so disheartening to think that we all have to go to such extremes to protect an electrical system that has been working so well for so many years. Rural people are fiercely independent and survivors; we will continue to defend our rights for cost effective electric rates by doing what is right and what makes sense!

Thank you.

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