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Co-op Members Cannot Afford Price Increases, Job Losses from Carbon Regulations

Both local and national electric cooperative leaders are voicing concern on the latest round of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations limiting carbon dioxide emissions for power plants.

"Americans count on affordable and reliable energy to power our communities, promote job and economic growth, and keep costs in line for the basic necessities in our family budgets. New EPA regulations that add to the price of electricity have serious consequences for our communities, jobs and families," say National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) CEO Jo Ann Emerson.

"It's very disappointing and disturbing that the EPA proposed a regulation that goes further than the

Clean Air Act allows by taking an 'outside the fence' approach to setting the emissions reduction requirements that states must accomplish."

Dennis Lenox, president of VVEC's board of trustees, says the electric utility industry does not support these regulations, and co-op members across the country did not hesitate to let their feelings be known in Washington.

"Through Action.coop and TellePA.com, more than half a million electric co-op members sent comments to the EPA regarding the consequences of this legislation."

He goes on to say "it threatens affordability, jeopardizes reliability, and endangers American jobs."

The U.S. relies on coal for 40-percent of its electricity.

After the EPA finalizes its proposal in mid-2015, it will give states one year to design their plans to implement the regulation.

"If a state doesn't come up with an effective implementation plan, the EPA can impose a federal plan," Lenox explains. He adds Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt has vowed to file suit against the EPA regulations.

The coal industry and its allies, including lawmakers from coal-producing states, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the National Association of Manufacturers, argue the rule would boost electricity prices and raise the cost of doing business.

"America's electric cooperatives are also concerned these regulations will increase electricity prices and force power plant shutdowns, thereby harming the economy and jobs of hard-working Americans. However, there are a lot of details to work through in this proposal - and additional details that will be outlined in yet-to-be-developed state plans," says Emerson.

"Co-ops serve some of America's communities most sensitive to, and least able to afford, increases in the cost of energy. Electric co-ops require independence and flexibility to choose solutions based on the needs of the communities they serve, which thoughtfully take into account balanced consideration of affordability, reliability and environmental responsibility.



Know How to Dispose of This?

Disposing of CFL bulbs is different than the old fluorescent bulbs

Compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs are certainly more energy-efficient than the old light bulbs everyone used. And they last longer too.

Disposing of them is different also.

Because of the mercury in them, it's not safe to simply throw them away in your household trash. It's best to take them to an authorized recycling location.

Lowe's and Home Depot are authorized recycling locations in VVEC's service territory.

Lowe's – Look for the big blue box next to the customer service desk. There are bags available to use for the bulbs, or members can put them in plastic bags at home and bring them to the nearest Lowe's.

Home Depot – Bag the bulbs at home, then take them to the 'Returns' desk in any Home Depot. Please note Home Depot accepts the 'curly' CFL bulbs (such as the one pictured here), but not the large fluorescent bulbs.

If you have questions about these stores' policies on disposing CFL bulbs, please contact the nearest store directly.



Right-of-Way Maintenance Work Delayed

The rain that fell in June was certainly welcome, but it delayed some of scheduled right-of-way maintenance.

Plans called for Progressive Solutions to begin spraying trees, brush and vines growing under VVEC's electric lines beginning in early June.

"Progressive Solutions moved on to other contracts," explains VVEC Right-of-Way Coordinator Lon Lambert. "But they will return to our area about mid-summer or later and begin treating our rights-of-way."

He goes on to say right-of-way maintenance is on-going even though the chemical treating of vegetation is on-hold.

"As of the end of May, we have already cut and mowed more than 655,350 feet of right-of-way and removed almost 6,400 trees," he says.

Lambert encourages members to think ahead when planting trees.

"I like to tell people to stop and think about where that tree's branches are going to be five years from now, or 10 years from now," he says. "Make sure you're not planting that tree where it's going to grow into our power lines, or into our right-of-way. What can be pretty right now, or offer some shade right now, could also be the cause of a power outage during a storm."

He explains any species of vegetation, trees or brush that could grow tall enough to reach the electric lines within VVEC's easements will be removed.

SUMMER ENERGY EFFICIENCY:

Myth vs. Fact

Myth #1: When I'm not home, keeping my air conditioner at a lower temperature throughout the day means it doesn't have to run harder to cool my home when I return.

FACT: To save energy, set your thermostat to a higher temperature during the day, and lower it when you return home.

Myth #2: Closing vents on my central air conditioning system will boost efficiency.

FACT: Closing vents can cause the compressor to cycle too frequently and the heat pump to overload. You'll also use more energy.

Myth #3: Time of day doesn't matter when it comes to running my appliances.

FACT: Time of day does matter when running electrical loads. For example, take advantage of the delay setting and run your dishwasher at night to avoid peak times of use and save energy.

Myth #4: Bigger is always better when it comes to cooling equipment.

FACT: Too often, cooling equipment isn't sized properly and leads to higher electric bills. A unit that's too large for your home will not cool evenly and might produce higher humidity indoors.



VVEC offices will be closed Friday, July 4 to allow employees to celebrate Independence Day with their families. Service personnel will be on duty throughout the holiday weekend. Call 918-371-2584 or 1-800-870-5948 to report an outage.

Take a Vacation from High Power Bills

Soaring temperatures and sultry summer nights can cause electric bills to skyrocket. This summer, take a vacation from high electric bills by making your home – and your family’s habits – more energy efficient.

Beat the Heat

Air conditioning helps most Americans beat the sweltering summer heat. According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), air conditioning accounts for as much as 50 percent of the average household electric bill. Proper maintenance and smart use of your home’s cooling system will help keep your electric bill in check.

First, make sure your air conditioner’s external unit is clean and free of debris. Clear away dead leaves or overgrown plants and weeds to enable the unit to perform as it should.

Second, change all of the air filters inside your home quarterly, or more often in homes with allergy sufferers or smokers. Fresh filters not only reduce the strain on your cooling system, but

improve the air quality in your home.

Third, the DOE recommends you set your home’s thermostat as high as possible, while still maintaining a comfortable environment for your family during the summer months.

Bumping the thermostat up at least two degrees can make a noticeable difference on your power bill. Investing in a programmable thermostat can lead to even greater savings by automatically adjusting it so that the cooling system runs more often when you are at home and less often when you are away.

Made in the Shade

Windows are not only great sources of natural light in your home, but also great sources of heat during the summer. Curtains, blinds, and shades



are some of the most cost-effective ways to make your windows and home more energy efficient. These window coverings offer low-cost, stylish solutions to shield the sun’s rays and keep the interior of your home cool and comfortable. Proper weather stripping and caulking around window panes and casings will also improve the function of your windows by keeping the cool air in and the hot air out. Solar film applied to your home’s existing windows will further repel the summer heat.

RECIPE

Easy Grape Salad



- 1 lb. seedless green grapes**
- 1 lb. seedless red grapes**
- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened**
- 1 7-oz. jar marshmallow creme**
- 1 6-oz. pkg. slivered almonds**

Wash grapes in a colander under running water, and remove all stems. Place in a large bowl.

In a separate bowl, stir together the cream cheese and marshmallow creme until smooth and creamy. Pour the mixture over the grapes. Using a rubber spatula or large serving spoon, fold the mixture into the grapes until well coated. Fold in the almonds.

This salad may be served immediately, or covered and refrigerated for 1 hour to set slightly, and to allow flavors to blend.