

SPEAKER 1: The recent recommendation of the governor's environmental quality council to locate NSP's next power plant in Henderson, Minnesota is a prime example of the lack of any rational energy program in this state. About 40 families will be displaced and several thousand acres of prime farmland destroyed at this site.

And yet this recommendation was made with the most superficial examination that the plant is really needed with little or no investigation of alternatives to securing electric power from other sources and with no examination of the long range need for this prime farmland.

We support the hundreds of people in the Henderson area who are angered over this decision. We find them completely justified in asking what right the state has to sacrifice their homes and farms for an electric power plant when no attempt is made to conserve the great amount of energy wasted to produce waste such as in the production of nonreturnable containers.

We find them justified in asking are neon lights more important than prime farmland? Electricity is not penny cheap, and it is long past due the time when we can accept the power companies projections of demand for electricity. Their interests in supplying power to meet demand, much of which they promote, must now be questioned and replaced by a state policy which examines real power needs, that investigates alternatives to new plants, and that establishes a firm and meaningful program of electric conservation.

Therefore, we have asked Governor Anderson in a letter last Friday to support the following five-point proposal. First, we ask the governor to support a reversal of the decision to site the next NSP plant at Henderson, Minnesota and to postpone any citing decisions until proper investigation of need, alternatives, and land use can be made.

Second, we have asked the governor to support a one-year moratorium on any plant citing decisions. That year should be spent to set up a state mechanism to determine needs, to investigate alternatives, and to give proper consideration to long-range land use. Third, we ask the governor to support our opposition to the present bill to establish a state plant siting council.

This bill requires major revisions, including an Amendment to make it contingent upon establishment of need prior to site selection. In its present form, the bill does little more than grease the skids for new power plants, setting a priority list of sites to be gobbled up as fast as industry asks for them.

Fourth, we ask the governor to support a firm and meaningful state energy conservation program to be started immediately. In the short run, conservation of energy would eliminate any fears that a crisis might result from a one-year moratorium. In the long run, it would slow down the demand for energy, hopefully allowing time for development of power generating methods that are less destructive to the environment.

Fifth, we have asked the governor to actively support a stepped up national program to promote development of cleaner, safer electric power generation technologies, some of which are immediately feasible. We ask the governor to now take leadership in this critical area of energy production and to help make Minnesota a healthier, happier place to live.