

November 19, 2002

The Honorable  
Common Council of the  
City of Milwaukee  
City Hall, Room 205  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Honorable Members of the Common Council:

I am returning to you unsigned Common Council Resolution No. 021038 that endorses the We Energies "Power the Future" plan. That plan calls for building three new coal-burning plants in Oak Creek.

While I appreciate the Council's support for one of Milwaukee's leading corporations, your immediate adoption of this legislation — without full debate — was not in the public interest.

Your action did not allow participation by concerned citizens and informed scientists on many important questions, including: Is natural gas a more desirable fuel? Will adding coal-fired plants pose mercury and other hazards to Lake Michigan — the source of our drinking water? Will the air quality in the city and region be made unhealthy by creating what may become the 10<sup>th</sup>-largest coal-fired power plant in the US?

While your resolution does not explicitly endorse coal-powered technologies, it overlooks altogether the possible advantages of gas-powered plants.

The PSC and the DNR will almost certainly ask We Energies to explore cleaner technologies, and We Energies has pledged to use "clean" coal technologies helping to lower emissions of nitrogen oxides, sulfide dioxides, carbon dioxide and other pollutants. Yet even "clean" coal is quite dirty compared to natural gas.

Unnecessarily adding more pollution to the region's air and water will hurt Milwaukee's appeal to residents, visitors, and businesses. As you know, quality of life is increasingly the key factor in urban development and attracting young workers.

These issues deserved a full airing and I urge you in the future to consider ways to help that happen.

Sincerely,

JOHN O. NORQUIST  
Mayor

