

NEWS RELEASE



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers®
AFL-CIO-CLC

900 Seventh St. N.W.
Washington DC 20001

www.ibew.org

Edwin D. Hill, International President

Salvatore J. Chilia, International Secretary-Treasurer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 30, 2012

Contact: Jim Spellane 202-728-6014

Jim_spellane@ibew.org

Statement of Edwin D. Hill, President, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers On First Energy's Announcement of Coal-Fired Power Plant Closings

WASHINGTON, D.C. – First Energy's announcement that it will close six coal-fired power plants by Sept. 1, 2012, specifically because of the implementation of stricter emission-control rules by the Environmental Protection Agency, should be viewed as the tip of the iceberg. The projected loss of 529 jobs and 2,689 megawatts of capacity may be seen as tolerable by those who support the rapid implementation of the EPA rules. As we have consistently argued, this is most likely only the opening round of a series of similar announcements by other companies that will have serious negative consequences on jobs, the reliability of the grid and the cost of electricity in several highly populated parts of the nation.

The following plants will be closed in September:

OHIO

- Bay Shore Plant, Units 2-4, Oregon, Ohio
- Eastlake Plant, Eastlake, Ohio
- Ashtabula Plant, Ashtabula, Ohio

- Lake Shore Plant, Cleveland

PENNSYLVANIA

- Armstrong Power Station, Adrian, Pa.

MARYLAND

- R. Paul Smith Power Station, Williamsport, Md.

The IBEW does not oppose the transition away from heavy reliance on older coal-fired plants to reduce emissions. The health of our members who work in the industry and the communities we serve is as important to us as it is to anyone. Four of the six plants scheduled to be closed by First Energy were already on a list of older facilities to be taken out of service. What is equally important in our view is to effect this transition in a manner that has minimal impact on the productivity and reliability of the industry and thus on the economic well-being of the customer base.

What is ominous about First Energy's announced plan is that two of the plants on the list were not previously scheduled for closure. One of these plants has a newer generator that, given enough time, could be retrofitted with equipment to enable it to meet the EPA's emission standards. Under the current timetable, however, that option is closed. More time would also allow the other power plants to continue operation to provide electricity while such upgrades were being done. Rapid implementation of the EPA rules shuts down this common-sense option.

We believe that governments, the business community and the public must understand that this is only one company announcing shutdown plans. Other companies, including AEP, Duke Energy, Progress Energy and the Southern Company, also rely heavily on coal-fired plants to provide electric power to broad regions ranging from Illinois, Ohio, West Virginia, parts of Pennsylvania and a major part of the Southeast – all areas that have been hit hard by the recession and high rates of unemployment and are struggling to recover.

There is a solution. The IBEW and others strongly support S-1833 introduced by Sens. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and Dan Coats (R-Ind.) that would align the deadlines for implementation of the Transport Rule and the Utility MATS rules by the EPA and extend them for five years. This would provide needed predictability to industries and communities and allow for the installation of technology that would keep many plants in service as well as provide time for bringing new facilities online. We believe the Manchin-Coats legislation makes perfect sense both for cleaner air and the economic well-being of our nation.

It is past time for Congress to get past gridlock and partisan concerns and enact Manchin-Coats for the good of our country. The alternative, we fear, is a repetition of First Energy's actions several times over, with serious consequences for us all..

###

The [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers](#) (IBEW) represents approximately 725,000 members who work in a wide variety of fields, including manufacturing, utilities, construction, telecommunications, broadcasting, railroads and government.