



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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For Immediate Release – October 30, 2009
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PSC Approves Biomass Conversion at Bay Front Power Plant

MADISON – In a unanimous decision today, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) approved Northern States Power Company-Wisconsin's (NSPW) proposal to install the nation's largest biomass gasifier, a system that will produce synthetic gas from biomass for the production of electricity at the company's Bay Front Power Plant in Ashland, Wisconsin.

The PSC's decision today will allow NSPW to convert one of the plant's coal burning boilers to one that generates electricity from burning a variety of wood types found in Wisconsin. The new biomass gasifier will be able to produce 20 megawatts of electricity from biomass fuel sources, while producing an additional 8 megawatts through the use of natural gas.

"This project swaps out 20 megawatts of old, boutique coal for locally grown biomass, keeping ratepayers' fuel dollars in Wisconsin," said Chairperson Eric Callisto. "Our ratepayers send over a billion dollars out of state every year to buy coal for power generation. Today's decision helps keep more of those dollars here in Wisconsin."

"The technology approved today uses a fuel resource that is plentiful in Wisconsin and in close proximity to the plant," said Commissioner Mark Meyer. "When considering the many positive impacts to using homegrown fuel sources and the projects profound reduction in greenhouse gas emissions into Wisconsin's atmosphere, today's decision is really in the best interest of the state as a whole."

"We are at a critical crossroads in energy policy," said Commissioner Lauren Azar. "Every decision we make today needs to be considered in the context of the fact that we will soon be engaging in a transformation of our energy infrastructure. I believe this biomass gasifier will be a component of Wisconsin's energy future."

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The technology approved at the plant has been developed over the past half century and is being used throughout the world because of growing interest in clean, renewable energy. Hundreds of biomass gasifiers are in operation globally, with most of them found in Asia and Europe at small-scale plants that provide comparatively small amounts of heat or electricity to farms and small industries. To date, the use of biomass gasifiers for the production of electricity in the U.S. has been predominantly small in scale, although some larger units have been installed in recent years.

Documents associated with NSPW's application can be viewed on our Electronic Regulatory Filing System at <http://psc.wi.gov/>. Enter case number 4220-CE-169 in the boxes provided on the PSC homepage, or click on the Electronic Regulatory Filing System button.

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