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## Invenergy: Plant in Burrillville would cut regional carbon dioxide emissions by more than previously forecast

Invenergy is now saying that its proposed natural gas-fired power plant in Burrillville would lead to an even larger net decrease in regional emissions than the company had initially forecast.

The Chicago-based energy developer has argued that because its super-efficient combined-cycle plant would sell power at a lower price than competing generators, it would replace the output of older, more polluting facilities that burn oil, gas or coal, effectively forcing them to shut down.

According to figures the company released in August, if the 900-megawatt Clear River Energy Center were to go on line immediately, the reduction in carbon dioxide emissions across New England would be 9 percent. If the project starts generating power in 2019 as scheduled, the effect wouldn't be as dramatic because some of the biggest polluters, such as Somerset's coal-fired Brayton Point Power Station, would already be closed, but the overall decrease would still be about 1 percent.

Now, in a filing made with the Rhode Island Energy Facility Siting Board, Invenergy claims the decrease could actually be larger because of the recently announced closing of the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station in Plymouth, Mass.

The company says that, without the Burrillville project, when Pilgrim closes in 2019 the 690-megawatt nuclear plant - which produces no greenhouse gases - would need to be replaced by dirtier generators that would boost regional emissions. So when the Burrillville facility comes into operation, it would effectively displace a greater number of more polluting power plants that would otherwise be needed, according to Invenergy's argument.

The company did not provide figures to back up the claim on Pilgrim in the filings, which were submitted to the board on Oct. 29, and has yet to respond to a request from The Journal to provide more details.

Environmental groups, including the Sierra Club of Rhode Island and Fossil Free Rhode Island, have rejected Invenergy's original claim about reducing regional emissions. They say that Invenergy has failed to take into consideration the harmful effects of methane leaks when natural gas is extracted using hydraulic fracturing and when it's delivered through pipelines from shale fields in Pennsylvania and beyond. Methane is a much more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.

"Invenergy's reasoning flies in the face of common sense and basic physics," said Fossil Free Rhode Island member Peter Nightingale, a physics professor at the University of Rhode Island. "The Burrillville power plant will be fired by fracked gas, which has a full life-cycle greenhouse gas footprint larger than the coal, oil, and nuclear power it will replace."

Some Burrillville residents also oppose the proposal because it would add another large industrial use to the largely rural community. The town is already home to a smaller natural gas-fired power plant and a gas compressor station connected to a regional pipeline.

The power plant, which could have a capacity of up to 1,000 megawatts, would be among the largest in New England. Invenergy says it's necessary because of the retirements of a host of old generators in coming years. Gov. Raimondo has backed the plan as have construction unions in the state.

The filing by Invenergy with the siting board, which totals hundreds of pages, fleshes out the company's proposed \$700-million project.

In an economic impact report included in the filing, Invenergy says the state would receive \$1.3 billion in benefits through the project over time, from 300 construction jobs and 25 full-time operating positions, as well as through \$70 million in estimated annual energy savings, among other effects.

"We're confident our project will play a major role in solving Rhode Island's energy challenges, bringing clean, affordable and reliable new energy to the state and the region," Bryan Schueler, Invenergy's senior vice president of project development, said in a statement. "We're ready to invest in Rhode Island and its workforce to make this project a reality, and we look forward to the EFSB's review of our proposal."

The siting board is still reviewing the filing and has yet to formally open a docket on the proposal. Once a docket is created, public hearings will be scheduled.

-- This report was updated at 9:33 a.m.



PHOTO/ INVENERGY - CLEAR RIVER ENERGY CENTER

A rendering of the proposed Burrillville power plant.