

BPU BOARD EXTENDS COMMENT PERIOD FOR DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT 12/19/06

The BPU is today extending the public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Clean Coal Project until January 19, 2007. The DEIS has already been the subject of two public meetings and a public comment period of 58 days; the BPU is providing a three week extension to the public comment period.

The DEIS was first issued in October 2006. The DEIS describes the environmental benefits of the Clean Coal Project, including that the new plant would reduce sulfur dioxide emissions per unit of energy produced by more than 94%, nitrogen oxide emissions by about 86%, and mercury emissions by about 95%. The new CFB Plant would also reduce carbon dioxide emissions by about 20% on an energy output basis, as compared to our existing coal-fired plant. This exceeds the reductions in both the Kyoto Protocol (7%) and the Northeastern States Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (10%).

The BPU has provided for public comment on the Clean Coal Project under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) since November 2004. During that time, the BPU has prepared three scoping documents regarding the Clean Coal Project identifying topics to be covered in the DEIS and solicited public comment by conducting four public scoping meetings as well as 40 public informational meetings. These public comments were reviewed and considered in preparing the DEIS.

The BPU has also gone beyond the SEQR requirements for DEIS public comment. SEQR only requires a 30-day public comment period and no public hearings. The BPU has held two public hearings, and will be providing 80 days for public comment.

General Manager Walter Haase explained that the extension will provide the public “with an additional opportunity to provide comment on the DEIS. Further, it reflects the comments we received from the public on this issue. While some parties requested an extension, others were concerned about the cost implications of an extension. The BPU has balanced these interests in extending the comment period until January 19, 2007.”