

**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA**

NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday, August 1, 2006

Commissioners Clark, Wefald, and Cramer

****For Immediate Release****

Phone 701-328-2400

COMMISSION ANNOUNCES POWER PLANT HEARING

The North Dakota Public Service Commission announced today that it will be holding an informal hearing on August 4 on the proposed Big Stone Power Plant II. The informal hearing, which will be held at 10:00 a.m. in the Judicial Wing, **Conference Room C (Room 304)**, State Capital Building, Bismarck, will discuss costs of the proposed power plant, and other related issues.

Ottertail Power Company and Montana Dakota Utilities Company have both expressed an interest in obtaining power for their electric customers from the proposed plant.

The public is invited to attend the informal hearing or to listen in by phone.

The proposed Big Stone Power Plant, which would be located adjacent to Big Stone Power Plant I in eastern South Dakota, would provide baseload power to seven utility participants in the region.

Last week in a letter to the Commission, Ottertail estimated that the cost of the major coal fired power plant and needed transmission would be \$1.8 billion, up 50% from previous estimates, citing improvements in plant design, increases in commodity costs, and higher than expected costs for construction labor.

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