



League of Women Voters of Alabama

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Statement at the June 18, 2013 Public Proceedings Regarding the Operation and Utilization of Rate RSE (Rate Stabilization and Equalization) of Alabama Power Company

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation at all levels of government. We further believe that governmental bodies must protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.

The League of Women Voters of Alabama (LWVAL) is pleased to be participating in this open public meeting, and also appreciates that, as requested, the public record of these meetings is being provided on the web site of the Alabama Public Service Commission (APSC).

Electric utilities in many states plan for electricity generation, transmission and distribution through a process that produces a twenty-year Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), or in Florida's case, a ten-year site plan. By design, the planning process includes public stakeholders to help evaluate the least-cost resources for meeting projected customer demand. Options are evaluated by comparing costs and benefits. In addition to conservation and efficiency measures, these can include retiring or retrofitting old plants, building new ones (fossil, nuclear or renewable) or purchasing power (including from customers).

Every three years, the Alabama Power Company (APC) submits its twenty-year IRP to our PSC but in the past there was no opportunity for public participation, or any access to the document held by our PSC, even with trade secrets appropriately removed. Thus, customers who pay for the decisions have no way to have an impact on them or to know if least-cost options for generation, transmission and distribution were selected.

In many other states regulated utilities plan for the long range, least-cost energy future of their customers in a process that allows for their participation. For example, in January 2013, [Georgia Power filed its latest IRP](#), which is on the Georgia PSC web site. The Georgia PSC has held hearings in April, May and June, including one today, June 18th, where customers can question assumptions and calculations and be involved in evaluating changes. However, sister company Alabama Power's IRP is unavailable from the company or from the Alabama PSC.

For most of the other documents the Alabama PSC has in its possession, after some practice, the searchable web site works well, and staff can and does give helpful guidance. [Section 37-1-62](#) of the Alabama Code provides that "All reports, records and accounts in the possession of the commission shall be open to inspection by the public at all times", with some exceptions which the commission can make. Alabama Power's unavailable IRP must be such an exception.

The League of Women Voters of Alabama respectfully requests that the Alabama Public Service Commission study practices in other Southern states for their least-cost Integrated Resource Planning processes. Adoption of such a process in our state would result in better transparency, accountability, and citizen participation for the energy future of Alabamians.