Here in Springfield, we are the owners of our city’s utility, City Water Light and Light (CWLP). That means we all have a say in important decisions that CWLP makes about our rates and our energy.

We are at a crossroads now, and the time has come to decide whether costly investments in CWLP’s Dallman coal plant are consistent with the Springfield community’s vision for its future. Units 1 and 2 at the Dallman coal plant were built in 1968 and 1972 respectively, and are estimated to need at least $11 million in upgrades to meet current public health standards. The coal plant’s units 1 and 2 are past their useful lives and should be phased out so CWLP can further invest in clean energy.

**CWLP’s Significant Financial Trouble is Linked to the Dallman Coal Plant**

CWLP’s financial troubles of the past few years can be directly linked to its operation of the aging, costly Dallman coal plant. In 2012, city officials declared technical default on CWLP’s debt and then proposed a series of rate hikes, raising rates 6.75% between 2012 and 2013.1 CWLP is on track for a second credit default this year. Meanwhile, according to the Department of Energy, wind prices have decreased 40 percent nationally since 2009.2

Given CWLP’s track record of significantly miscalculating the energy market, along with the reality that energy prices in the region have remained fairly steady and none of the national energy forecasters predict anything close to the increase needed to justify continued operation of Units 1 and 2, neither our finances nor our health can afford to wait any longer to change course.3 Springfield residents deserve a forward-thinking utility that makes smart investments in affordable, renewable energy before dumping ratepayer dollars into a coal plant far past its prime.

**Coal Hurts Our Health.**

Pollution from coal-fired power plants like the CWLP’s Dallman coal plant hurts our health and environment. Heavy metals emitted from Dallman’s smokestacks and…
deposited in our water can contribute to neurological damage, particulates in the air can contribute to lung disease and asthma, and byproduct gases cause acid rain and climate disruption.

According to the Clean Air Task Force, the Dallman coal plant is a major threat to the health of Springfield residents, spewing pollution at levels that contribute to an estimated 79 asthma attacks and 5 premature deaths every year. The Dallman coal plant poses a threat to our water, too. In a 2001 report by the Prairie Rivers Network and the Environmental Integrity Project, high levels of arsenic were found in CWLP coal ash pits where CWLP dumps toxic ash left over from the coal it burns at the Dallman coal plant.

**SPRINGFIELD’S ENERGY CAN BE CLEAN & LOCAL.**

In nearby states, publicly owned utility companies like CWLP are seizing on clean energy opportunities and finding that it is saving customers’ money:

- In Nebraska, Lincoln Electric System will save its customers $160 million with a 100mw wind purchase.
- In Omaha, the Omaha Public Power District announced this past July that it will phase out its 650mw North Omaha coal fired power plant and replace it with wind and energy efficiency with minimal to no rate increase.
- In Missouri, the city of Springfield announced it would build one of the largest solar installations in the state because it made economic sense. In Independence Missouri, the local utility recently announced it would move to retire its old coal plants to avoid costly retrofits, and on the same day, it voted to triple its investments in clean energy.

Springfield Illinois should join the ranks of these forward-thinking public utilities that are just as committed to affordable and reliable energy as CWLP.

**Contact Us to Get Involved.**

Let’s work together to call on CWLP to make the right decision for Springfield, and to phase out aging infrastructure in favor of investment in local jobs in the clean energy industry.

Get involved in the Springfield community and help create a cleaner, healthier, and more economical vision for the city. Contact Rachel Goldstein at rachel@greencorps.org or 973-454-7304 to get involved.

ENDNOTES

1 [http://www.sj-r.com/article/20120301/News/303019926](http://www.sj-r.com/article/20120301/News/303019926)
3 [http://www.cwlp.com/electric/generation/EnvironmentalComplianceStudy.pdf paged 10-7 and 10-8](http://www.cwlp.com/electric/generation/EnvironmentalComplianceStudy.pdf paged 10-7 and 10-8)