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Trump order to keep Michigan coal plant running will mean higher energy bills in Wisconsin

Families and businesses across the Midwest, including here in Wisconsin, will be footing the bill to bring an empty coal plant back online in Michigan. In May, the Trump Administration used an emergency order to force Consumers Energy to truck coal back on site and fire up the old plant. So far, that has come with a price tag of \$29 million in just 5 weeks.

“Staff were gone and there actually was no coal left on site. At the last minute, Trump’s DOE ordered the plant continue operating through late August because of a fabricated ‘energy emergency,’ using emergency wartime powers,” explains Clean Wisconsin Energy & Air Manager Ciaran Gallagher. “Michigan state regulators, the utility owner, and the Midwest grid operator, MISO, had all agreed that this plant is not needed for reliability.”

Consumers Energy, the utility that owns the plant, will be allowed to recoup its costs to bring the plant back online through price increases on customers across the Midwest grid, including families and businesses in Wisconsin. Gallagher says the Trump Administration will likely issue similar orders in the coming months to keep other imminently retiring coal plants open. Complying with those orders will come with high costs that ultimately fall to customers.

“The Trump Administration is pushing chaos into our carefully planned energy system. It’s expensive, wasteful, and there is absolutely no benefit to customers or utilities. Coal plants are retiring because they don’t make economic sense anymore, and the pollution they cause is devastating for the communities where they are located,” Gallagher says.

The Trump tariffs are already increasing costs for all energy resource installations including solar, wind, batteries, and gas, and the Administration’s focus on increasing natural gas exports has raised electricity costs across the country. Meantime, Congress

has eliminated clean energy incentives that had been available the Inflation Reduction Act that helped lower electricity prices.

"The Trump Administration's actions show that this is a totally manufactured emergency," says Gallagher. "If there was a real energy emergency, we would not be increasing energy exports, and we certainly wouldn't put up barriers to inexpensive, quickly deployable resources like solar and wind. Everyone should be concerned about the reckless orders we are seeing from this administration because we will all pay for them."