

February 26, 2013

Senator Ken Haar  
District 21 State Capitol  
PO Box 94604  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Dear Senator Haar,

Thank you for your request for our assistance and input on Legislative Bill 567 (LB567) that proposes to change provisions relating to approval of electric generation facilities and transmission lines. This bill would mandate the consideration of the health, economic, and environmental impacts of proposed electric generation facilities. The College of Public Health is committed to promoting the health and well being of the population by assisting policymakers to make informed decisions about legislation that could impact health. If asked to participate, we are ideally suited to assist with the goals of this legislation to conduct a scientifically rigorous and objective investigation into the potential health, economic, and environmental impacts of electric generation facilities. I am writing in support of LB567 as an individual faculty member. My comments do not represent the University of Nebraska.

In Nebraska, there is a dearth of empirical evidence for the direct health impact of electric generation facilities. However, studies sponsored or produced by various non-partisan and non-profit organizations including the Environmental Protection Agency, American Lung Association, and the Clean Air Task Force suggest that the emissions from these facilities could be a serious public health concern that requires rigorous scientific assessment and evaluation. In 2010, the National Academy of Sciences published a report titled "Hidden Costs of Energy: Unpriced Consequences of Energy Production and Use" which synthesized national and international evidence on this topic. The findings in the report suggested that power plant emissions, in general, negatively impact population health and lead to lower worker productivity and higher health care costs. However, the impact varies considerably by the type of fuels used for electricity generation and this impact must be weighed against the enormous benefits to society of electric generation. If the resources can be made available, we would be able to assist in comprehensive health, economic, and environmental impact assessments that would involve key stakeholders to collect and analyze the necessary data.

The College of Public Health at UNMC is poised to act in a leadership role within the state and the region toward issues dealing with the state's environmental health. We look forward to working with you on this, and other issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim P. Stimpson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" and last name "Stimpson" clearly distinguishable.

Jim P. Stimpson, PhD  
Director, UNMC Center for Health Policy  
Associate Professor of Health Services Research & Administration, College of Public Health,  
University of Nebraska Medical Center

CC:

Senator Tom Carlson, Chairman  
Senator Lydia Brasch  
Senator Annette Dubas  
Senator Ken Haar  
Senator Rick Kolowski  
Senator Ken Schilz  
Senator Jim Smith  
Harold M. Maurer, Chancellor  
Robert D. Bartee, Vice Chancellor for External Affairs  
Ayman El-Mohandes, Dean, College of Public Health