

Public Advocate Calls on White House to Deny Subsidies for Coal and Nuclear Plants

Dover, Del. – Delaware’s Public Advocate today issued a letter to the White House asking the Trump administration to deny a request for emergency bailouts for aging coal and nuclear power plants owned by a large regional energy supplier.

[The letter](#) addresses a recent filing from Ohio-based FirstEnergy Solutions asking the federal Department of Energy to issue an “Emergency Order” directing subsidies to the company’s plants using funds from ratepayers’ electric bills in Delaware and other states in the PJM region.

“Not only has FirstEnergy not shown why coal and nuclear subsidies are needed, but they are trying to circumvent the deliberative process that is ongoing at PJM,” said Delaware Public Advocate Drew Slater. “In a free market, price is a key determinant in business decisions. As coal and nuclear plants become uneconomic, ratepayers should not be forced to prop up old and inefficient technology just to protect the profits of a big power company.”

This week PJM, the regional grid operator serving 13 states and the District of Columbia, performed a reliability analysis given FirstEnergy’s recent bankruptcy and Emergency Order filings. PJM found that phasing out FirstEnergy’s coal and nuclear plants as scheduled would have no adverse effect on the reliability of the electric grid.

“Given that PJM has stated the system remains reliable, and absent a true emergency need, which has not been demonstrated, to subsidize uneconomic coal and nuclear plants, I ask that FirstEnergy’s request for an emergency order be denied,” Slater said.

In addition to the White House letter, the Division of the Public Advocate has intervened in the FirstEnergy case pending before the federal Department of Energy and provided comment on the proposed order along with many other stakeholders, including the Delaware Public Service Commission.

The Division of the Public Advocate advocates for the lowest reasonable rates, principally on behalf of residential and small commercial consumers, consistent with the maintenance of adequate utility service and consistent with an equitable distribution of rates among all classes of consumers.