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Governor Doyle Signs Utility Siting Bill

New Law Will Provide Incentives for Local Governments to Host Power Generating Facilities

OAK CREEK – At a bill signing ceremony at the Oak Creek Community Center, Governor Jim Doyle signed into law today a bill that provides financial incentives to communities that agree to site power plants. The Governor said the bill – Assembly Bill 378 – represents a significant step forward in the state's efforts to improve Wisconsin's economy by ensuring that we can meet our future energy needs.

Under AB 378, communities across the state that are considering proposed power generating facilities will be compensated for the additional costs often incurred with utility siting – from road construction, improved safety, environmental impacts and other expenses.

"This new law will balance the need for low-cost, reliable power with the needs of the communities where energy production is sited," Governor Doyle said. "And not only does it address the needs of communities being asked to site power plants today, but also other communities considering siting power plants down the road. This law will benefit communities all over the state that host new power plants, and it will help the state meet its energy needs that power our economy and our homes."

"The case for this law is clear," Doyle said. "Wisconsin must invest in its energy infrastructure to meet its growing demand for power. We have not built a baseload plant in this state in 25 years, yet at the same time our energy consumption has increased by 2 to 3 percent each year. Let's face it, business will only come to Wisconsin, invest in Wisconsin, and stay in Wisconsin if we can guarantee to keep the lights on, at a reasonable rate with as little impact on the environment as possible."

Although the bill encourages baseload generation, whether it comes through gas or coal or some other source, the Governor said decisions about fuel choice ultimately must be made by the Public Service Commission during its review of power plant applications in Oak Creek and other communities considering power plants.

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“Our state needs to have a vigorous debate over our energy future – and provide ample opportunities for public comment about where power plants are sited,” Doyle said. “But with that very real public input, goes very real responsibility. We do not have the luxury of just saying no to new transmission and new power plants. Instead, we must agree to work together to find solutions, because at the end of the day, Wisconsin’s energy future – and our economic future – depends on us getting it right, but also getting it done.”