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David Maidenbergs statement for News Teleconference, 2/12/09

Governor Daniels strong support for the coal industry does no service to the Hoosier environment, our health or our ratepayers. It flies in the face of what is happening around the nation. Whether the administration's decisions are being made based on the Governor's friends in the coal industry or not, we don't know.

We do know that the coal industry has been much more adept at public relations than it's been at actually making coal "clean" in terms of mining, production, containment of waste and other facets of the business.

We do know that – in accelerating numbers – states are rejecting or reconsidering proposed coal plants.

We do know that the Daniel's administration has been extraordinarily supportive of coal and its new projects.

And now, thanks to this study, we see that the coal industry has also been extraordinarily supportive of Governor Daniels.

In other states, policy makers are coming to view coal differently:

- Just yesterday, South Carolina's Republican governor announced his opposition to a new coal plant in that state. According to the Post and Courier in Charleston, Governor Sanford said he decided to oppose the plant because of the increasing costs of coal, the eroding economy and the likelihood of federal controls on carbon.
- According to Sourcewatch, in 2008, 18 proposed coal plants were cancelled, abandoned, or put on hold, including 17 projects the United States and 1 project in the Netherlands.
- Sourcewatch also reports that 59 plants were cancelled, abandoned, or put on hold in 2007.
- In Kansas, Governor Sebelius vetoed an air permit for a new coal plant saying "Building additional coal plants now is likely to create a significant liability for Kansas in the future." She noted that renewable energy sources represent the state's engine of the future.

Governor Daniel's blind spot for fossil fuels is also exemplified by his dealings with British Petroleum when they sought permits for their expansion on our Lake Michigan shore. Instead of objective review of pollution data, his administration worked closely with BP, even assuring them

that IDEM would speed the permitting process in spite of questions from the EPA. A January 28th editorial in the Post-Tribune in Lake County said,

“[IDEM’s] goal of getting BP its permit -- regardless of the EPA, regardless of emissions from BP's flares, regardless of public comment -- shows the political appointees of the agency are nothing more than rubber stamps for industry. And if it's never been clear, it should be now: The rubber-stamping of such permits are at the behest of the governor's office.”

I am frankly not surprised that the Governor’s office has not been forthcoming with the public records we requested. I hope the Governor will ultimately do so. I also hope that somehow the Daniel’s administration begins to take seriously its responsibility to objectively regulate utilities and industry and to do so in a way that protects the health of Hoosiers. In the end, this will surely be the most effective way that we can rebuild the Indiana economy and to keep and attract new jobs to the state.

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