

For Immediate Release: Thursday November 29, 2012

**Contact: Nachy Kanfer (Sierra Club)
Kerwin Olson (CAC)
Claire Orphan (Sierra Club Press Secretary)**

New Poll Finds Hoosiers Oppose Sweetheart Deal for Duke Energy's Edwardsport Coal Plant

Public Opinion Poll and Companion Report Released by Sierra Club and Citizens Action Coalition Chronicle History of Corruption and Cost Overruns at Edwardsport- Public Unsympathetic

Indianapolis, IN: Today Sierra Club and Citizens Action Coalition released the results from a public opinion poll and report regarding the public perception of Duke Energy's Edwardsport coal gasification plant. An overwhelming number of consumers polled felt that rates should not be increased to cover the costs of the dangerous and over-priced coal project.

According to the poll: "Duke Energy ratepayers clearly oppose paying for cost overruns at the Edwardsport coal gasification plant. In contrast, ratepayers express strong support for expanding the use of renewable energy sources, including solar and wind energy, in Indiana, and they want Indiana utility companies to invest more in wind power."

Given the full story of corruption and mismanagement surrounding the plant, 78% of people polled felt that Duke shareholders should be shouldering the financial burden over Duke's customers, while 81% of Hoosiers polled felt that Duke should be investing in clean energy such as wind, solar and energy efficiency.

"The poll results show that Hoosiers want clean, renewable energy, not dirty coal pretending it's clean," said Bowden Quinn, conservation director for the Sierra Club Hoosier Chapter. "This plant was sold to the people of Indiana on the theory that it would capture and store carbon underground to help avert the threat of climate change. After taking money to study that idea, Duke decided it wasn't cost effective. That was just one of many con games that Duke has played with this facility."

The report from the citizens groups tells the story of Edwardsport from the beginning, covering the scandal between the IURC and Duke executives, the issues of malfeasance, project cost inflation and influence peddling at the statehouse. Early cost estimates placed the Edwardsport project at around 1.9 Billion dollars, since then the cost has ballooned to 3.5 Billion dollars and counting.

"We commissioned this report with CAC to help inform ratepayers about the story and context surrounding the added financial burden of a rate increase on families and consumers across the state," added Quinn. "The poll results clearly show that ratepayers within Duke's service territory don't want to be paying for this debacle."

Duke is seeking approval from the IURC to pass this increase in costs on to ratepayers throughout the state of Indiana. Duke customers could see a rate increase of a minimum of 14%.

"Our report describes in detail how the Edwardsport IGCC is the poster child for the pervasive culture of collusion and corruption that permeate the halls of Indiana government when it comes to the lack of legislative and regulatory oversight of investor owned utilities in our State," said Kerwin Olson, Executive Director of CAC. "Approval of this settlement and allowance of the confiscation of one single penny more of ratepayer money to pay for this fiasco would be nothing short of State sanctioned utility theft."

####