



Action Alert

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is now [accepting comments](#) on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for WEC's Paris RICE gas project through 12/16/2024. These comments are specifically on the [draft Environmental Impact Statement \(EIS\)](#) prepared by the PSC and DNR- so this is a chance to push these agencies to consider the environmental and health impacts of the project and will be relevant to the PSC proceeding and DNR's air permit decision. There will be a separate period for comments directed to the PSC on the merits of the proposal at a later time. ([Project Summary](#)).

[Click here to submit your comment](#)

Example Public Comment

"My name is [name] and as a concerned citizen/healthcare professional I ask that the PSC deny this proposal to add 7 RICE units to the Town of Paris in Kenosha. This proposal operates under the assumption that these units are needed to meet energy demand obligations for 2026. This assumption ignores the fact that natural gas use has negative effects on community health, has negative effects on the climate, and has a pool of alternative options with overwhelmingly more positive projections for outcomes.

Methane gas use has been shown to increase health harms such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, as well as cancer, kidney, and neurodevelopmental disorders such as Alzheimer's. Natural gas has also been directly linked to higher rates of asthma, negative outcomes for fetus and infant health, and higher rates of premature death.

Methane gas use also contributes to a number of negative environmental effects such as global warming and extreme weather events, which is becoming increasingly more relevant as climate change has been declared "the single biggest health threat facing humanit,," by the World Health Organization and other similar organizations

We understand that meeting rising energy demands is crucial, but we also understand that "natural gas" is not the only way to accomplish this. Using clean and renewable energy sources could meet our energy needs while bringing sustainable jobs to our communities, decreasing strain on our environment and healthcare industries, and DECREASING the cost of utilities as fossil fuel investments tie us to increasingly more outdated energy generation methods.

Fossil fuel and energy companies are aware of these facts and are leveraging the health of our community members and the environment against their immediate profits. That is why we ask

that the PFC fulfill their obligation to protect the public and provide safe and affordable utilities by denying this project proposal.”

More Details on the Project:

- Paris project is a newly proposed 130 MW RICE gas facility located near the existing Paris Generating Station with an anticipated commercial operation date by summer 2026.
- Includes 7 RICE or “Reciprocating Internal Combustion Engine” units, which would all operate using natural gas.
- Estimated cost at \$279.6 million without Allowance for Funds Used During Construction (AFUDC). Capital expenditures with AFUDC are estimated to be \$303.3 million.

Talking Points and Studies:

Gas Harms Community and Human Health

- From extraction to combustion, [fossil \(methane\) gas contributes to increased health harms](#): cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, cancer, kidney disorders, and neurodevelopmental disorders such as Alzheimer's.
- The [fetus, infant, and child](#) are all very vulnerable to air pollution, but those impacted the most are those who are socially and economically disadvantaged. Disadvantaged communities are historically [targeted](#) and bear the brunt of the health harms from gas pollution.
- Air pollution from fossil fuel combustion is one of the [leading risk factors of premature mortality](#).
 - [Air pollution can negatively affect almost every organ](#) system, including the kidneys, lungs, heart, and brain.
 - [It also contributes to](#) low birth weight, miscarriages, and increased infant mortality.
 - Air pollution exposure can lead to [cognitive impairments](#), increased rates of autism/ASD, and [lower academic performance](#).
 - Air pollution is a well-known [trigger of asthma attacks](#) in children.
- Investing in gas is investing in [health harms](#) versus health solutions.
- [National Institutes of Health research](#) shows those living in a zip code with a fuel-fired power plant experience asthma hospitalization rates 11% higher, respiratory infections rates 15% higher, and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) rates up 17% higher than demographically similar zip codes with no power plant.
- [Premature deaths](#) from burning natural gas have already surpassed deaths from coal in 19 states. Let's not add Wisconsin to this list when we can choose a brighter path.

Climate Concerns

- In 2021, the [World Health Organization](#) declared climate change to be “the single biggest health threat facing humanity.”
- [Fossil gas combustion](#) is the major source of global-warming greenhouse gases contributing to and accelerating climate change and related health harms. Methane released through fracking and transport is 86 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than CO2 over a 20-year time frame.
- The Governor’s Task on Climate Change listed “Avoid new fossil fuel infrastructure” as one of the things we must do to stop a climate catastrophe.
- The extreme weather events we’re already experiencing -- including historic droughts and floods, superstorms, record-breaking wildfires, and unprecedented coastal flooding -- will continue to rapidly worsen unless the world cuts carbon pollution.
- [Internal memos show](#) that fossil fuel companies are aware of scientific evidence suggesting that the lifecycle emissions from natural gas may be equal to those from coal. Yet, they continue to market natural gas as a safe, clean fuel that will help achieve climate goals. “Behind the scenes, industry leaders recognize the methane-related risks of natural gas while acting to lock in dangerous emissions for decades to come.” This plant is an example of building new fossil fuel infrastructure to lock in emissions for decades.

We Have Better Options

- Renewable energy saves lives, grows union jobs, and heals communities.
 - [Clean Energy Saves Lives](#): 100% clean energy production in Wisconsin would prevent 650 ER visits, over 85,000 asthma and respiratory cases, and ~ 2,000 premature deaths each year.
 - Renewable energy - including wind and solar power - provides safe, [cost effective](#), and [reliable](#) energy, as opposed to gas plants which have been found to be disproportionately [vulnerable to failure](#) during severe weather.
 - [Grow Union Jobs](#): Wisconsin utilities announced union commitments for solar, wind, and battery projects, bringing nearly 18,000 good-paying union jobs to Wisconsin.

Higher Utility Costs

- Any new fossil fuel infrastructure will be expensive and lock us into using fossil fuels for decades. Infrastructure is expensive, so it needs to run for decades in order to make it a worthwhile investment. Building these expensive plants is a windfall for power company shareholders, but is harming rate payers.
- We Energies is the most profitable utility in Wisconsin, [making more than double the revenue of the next highest utility](#).

- Recent analyses have found that energy burden is a central social determinant of health. It was so influential on premature mortality, self-reported health, and life expectancy, that only race and education had stronger influences ([Reames et al., 2021](#)).
- Racial disparities in energy burden in Milwaukee remain among the highest in the nation. Black and Hispanic/Latinx neighborhoods each experience more than 2x the energy burden of white neighborhoods.
- We Energies has the highest percentage of customers who are energy burdened, are behind in payments, and have had their energy shut off more than any other utility in Wisconsin.
- The Public Service Commission created a Pilot for We Energies to launch a Percentage of Income Payment Program to assist energy burdened customers with payments - but We Energies has failed to do so.
- The gas (fossil fuel) industry lies and our communities pay.
 - The fossil fuel industry uses [aggressive marketing tactics](#) similar to the [tobacco industry](#), promoting gas as a natural, clean energy source, but this is a lie.