

# COLO-UTE'S PLAN FOR WEST SLOPE: POWERLINE IS ONLY THE BEGINNING

Colorado-Ute is planning to construct a 345 kilovolt (kV) powerline between Rifle and San Juan, New Mexico. The line will carry 1000 megawatts (MW) of electricity. Where will this large amount of power be generated? Where will it be going? How much will it cost and who's paying?

## TWO 1600 MW COAL-FIRED POWER PLANTS BEING PLANNED

- \* Only a small portion of the power to be carried on the line will be generated by a power plant currently under construction - the Craig III plant. Most of it will be produced at two 1600 MW coal-fired power plants planned by Colorado-Ute for the Delta and Grand Junction areas. Each power plant would consist of four 400 MW units and would be built over a period of years.
- \* To carry the 3200 MW produced at these plants, more powerlines will be needed and will probably follow the same right-of-way.
- \* Colorado-Ute also wants to build the Tri-County Reservoir near Austin. All of the 55,000 acre-feet of water in the reservoir would be used for cooling at the Delta and Grand Junction plants.
- \* The powerline is only the first stage of Colorado-Ute's huge energy development plan for our area. Yet, it's to the company's advantage to discuss only one stage at a time. Once the powerline is built, there will be a great economic incentive to build the rest of the system.

## THE POWER IS NOT FOR WESTERN COLORADO

- \* The 1000 MW capacity of the powerline greatly exceeds the energy needs of western Colorado. The current energy demand of the entire Colorado-Ute system is only 400 MW and the proposed powerline is designed to serve only a portion of that system.
- \* While Colorado-Ute's sales of power to out-of-state utilities in 1980 were 20 times higher than in the previous year, power demand within the Colorado-Ute system itself dropped significantly. Possible development of the AMAX molybdenum mine and of Shell Oil's CO2 pipeline could contribute about 160 MW to local power demand in the future. However, even if this industrial growth occurred, with its associated residential growth, southwestern Colorado's needs fall far short of the powerline's capacity. Considering these facts, it is fair to conclude that most of the power carried by the powerline will be exported from western Colorado, either out-of-state or to the eastern slope.
- \* Utility experts have criticized Colorado-Ute for using "obsolete" methods to project future energy needs. The projected energy demands are based on the desires of a few companies, including AMAX and Shell, for large industrial developments that may never materialize. It is financially questionable for a utility to build an extensive and costly power supply system without having firm, guaranteed sales contracts prior to construction.

## BUT WESTERN COLORADANS ARE ASKED TO PAY FOR IT

- \* How much will the powerline cost? Over 170 million dollars.
- \* Who is paying for it? We, the consumer, through utility rate hikes.
- \* Remember, the powerline is only the first step. We will later be asked to pay for the coal-fired power plants, the Tri-County Reservoir, and the additional powerlines.
- \* Power plants cost more to build every day. The Craig plants cost \$700 million each. If built today, one plant would cost \$1 billion. Colorado-Ute is paying \$23 million interest annually, mostly on money borrowed to finance the Craig power plants.
- \* We will be paying for these massive facilities, to send power out-of-



state, not only in higher utility bills, but in air pollution from the power plants, crop damage from acid rain, loss of agricultural water, and more powerlines, each requiring a larger right-of-way and thereby reducing further our agricultural land.

#### THERE ARE PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVES

- \* Upgrading the existing 115 kV and 230 kV powerlines to carry additional power, a routine practice in the U.S., should be seriously explored.
- \* According to the Water and Power Resources Service, many existing dams in southwestern Colorado could be retrofitted with turbines to produce economical electricity.
- \* A major energy source lies in cogeneration, whereby electricity is generated as a by-product of industrial steam. According to a study by Dow Chemical, U.S. industry could supply approximately half of its electricity needs through cogeneration by 1985 (A.B. Lovins, Not Man Apart, 11/76). There is great potential for cogeneration in Colorado. Several oil shale companies expect to cogenerate electricity within 5 years and it has been estimated that AMAX could supply its back-up electrical needs through cogeneration at the Mt.Emmons mine.
- \* It costs far less to conserve the energy we waste than to produce new energy. Pacific Power and Light found that \$1.50 spent on weatherization would <sup>produce</sup> as much energy as \$4.00 invested in new energy facilities. Recognizing this, several utilities give their customers low- or no-interest loans to weatherize their homes at a great savings of money and energy. Other utilities are following suit. Why not Colorado-Ute?
- \* More than half of all energy used in the U.S. is for heat. Most of this can be supplied by available and economical solar energy systems, for which state and federal tax incentives exist.
- \* By spending our money on conservation and renewable energy systems rather than new and costly power plants and powerlines, we would save money and energy, create more job opportunities, and protect the quality of our life and environment in western Colorado.

#### THE VOICES OF CONCERNED CITIZENS MUST BE HEARD

- \* The Public Utilities Commission has scheduled a public hearing in Montrose on May 18, 19, and 20 to consider the need for the powerline. The meeting will be held at the Montrose District Court. All concerned citizens should be there - a strong showing of citizen concern can make a difference. Please attend at least part of the hearing. If you would like to speak at the hearing, contact any of the persons listed below for more information.
- \* Citizens from Paonia, Delta, Hotchkiss, Montrose, Crested Butte and Norwood have joined together as the Western Colorado Utilities Task Force. Through a mutual effort of WCUTF, the Gunnison River Coalition and the Western Slope Energy Research Center, funds are being raised for legal counsel and to bring expert witnesses to the hearing. Our goal is \$13,000. We need your contributions and help in fundraising events. Every donation, From \$5 to \$500 will help keep western Colorado a good place to live. Send your donations to the Gunnison River Coalition Legal Fund, P.O. Box 604, Hotchkiss, Colorado, 81419.

For more information or to volunteer, contact one of these persons:

<u>Montrose</u>	<u>Hotchkiss</u>	<u>Norwood</u>
Western Colorado Congress	WSERC	Wright's Mesa Elec.
Teresa Erickson 249-1978	Judy Robinson 872-3902	Consumers Assoc.
		Joe Pepi 327-4772

