

The Nature Conservancy Opposes Invenergy's Proposed Clear River Energy Power Plant

Invenergy's proposed 900MW power plant for Burrillville will make it more difficult for Rhode Island to achieve its newly enacted greenhouse gas reduction targets; it has not been proven necessary to meet energy needs; and it will pose unacceptable environmental risks to habitats and plant and animal species. For these reasons, The Nature Conservancy opposes the development of this power plant.

Achieving State Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets is Essential to Addressing Climate Threats: Climate change is the paramount threat to the mission of The Nature Conservancy – to conserve the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Nature Conservancy in Rhode Island has worked for many decades with partners to protect more than 35,000 acres of open space, parks and nature preserves, and has invested significant funds to restore our rivers, bays and coastal waters.

We support the Resilient Rhode Island Act of 2014 which established state goals of 10% greenhouse gas reductions by 2020, 45% by 2035, and 80% by 2050. Adding this new fossil fuel power plant would undermine the state's ability to achieve these goals.

Building a Power Plant in This Location Would Threaten the Ecosystem and its Biodiversity: The Invenergy power plant would threaten the integrity of a 12,000-acre forest area, one of the largest intact natural areas in Rhode Island. Moreover, the power plant's proposed location is within a critical corridor for wildlife movement to other healthy forest areas from the Quabbin Reservoir to the north and to the southern coast of Rhode Island.

Opportunities to Meet Energy Demand Through Efficiency and Renewables Should Be Prioritized to Avoid Unnecessary New Fossil Fuel Generation: The Nature Conservancy in Rhode Island supports a comprehensive approach to energy development that considers energy conservation, renewable energy, and other alternatives to fossil fuels. The Conservancy urges the state to undertake an independent assessment of its projected energy needs, within the context of the larger region's energy needs, and to develop a strategy to meet those projections before committing to a new large-scale power plant.