

Dominion files plan to meet growing energy needs

MICHAEL FELBERBAUM - AP Business Writer - Associated Press

Dominion Virginia Power is likely to close or convert some of its power stations, as well as open new ones as part of its blueprint to meet growing energy demands in the state, the company said in a filing with Virginia regulators Thursday.

The Richmond-based utility said it expects electricity demand to increase by nearly 30 percent by 2026. It added that a mix of new generation facilities, energy conservation and management programs, as well as transmission line upgrades will help meet reliability and environmental needs at the lowest cost.

Dominion, the state's largest utility with about 2.3 million customers, said that expected changes in environmental regulations will likely mean it will close its coal-fired Chesapeake Energy Center by 2016. One coal-fired unit at its Yorktown Power Station would likely close by 2015 and the second unit at the facility would be converted to natural gas. New air emissions controls also may need to be installed at certain facilities.

The company's plans also include two new 1,300-megawatt, natural gas-fired power stations to be in service by 2016 and 2019 and 12 smaller natural gas-fired turbine units coming into service between 2020 and 2026 at locations to be determined. It already is seeking approval for additional 1,300-megawatt, natural gas-fired power station near Front Royal.

Dominion additionally plans to convert its coal-fired Bremo Power Station in Fluvanna County to natural gas. It also just opened its 580-megawatt, natural gas-fired Bear Garden Power Station in Buckingham County.

Spokesman Jim Norvelle said the high availability and low price of natural gas, along with the environmental benefits, "makes it a good move for our customers' rates."

It also listed a third nuclear unit at its North Anna Power Station to be in service by 2022, but the company said it has not committed to move forward with the project and will reassess when it receives operating approval from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission expected in 2013.

"Nuclear energy must play an important part in providing for our nation's energy security, reliability and affordability," CEO Thomas Farrell II said in a statement.

In addition, Dominion said it plans to request approval for a program to lease rooftops of commercial buildings to install solar panels to add to its renewable energy portfolio. It also is seeking permission to convert three coal stations to use biomass as fuel, is pursuing plans for a solar facility in Halifax and is studying on-

Dominion files plan to meet growing energy needs

Published on Chem.Info (<http://www.chem.info>)

shore and off-shore wind generation.

The company also said its new Virginia City Hybrid Energy Center in Wise County that is expected to come online during the summer of 2012 also will be able to burn biomass for up to 20 percent of its fuel.

Glen Besa, director of the Sierra Club in Virginia, applauded Dominion's plans to close the coal-fired power stations because they are "major sources of pollution."

However, Besa said the group is disappointed that Dominion has "no made a firm commitment to wind or solar" energy as part of their plan.

"Gas is better than coal but at the same time, we want to see the diversification of fuel mix," Besa said.

As part of the plan, Dominion also said it is proposing several energy conservation programs, including home energy check-ups, promoting energy-saving light bulbs and partnering with business customers to help curtail electricity use.

Utilities in Virginia must file an integrated resource plan with the State Corporation Commission every two years.

Dominion said the plan is not a request for approval for the projects.

Appalachian Power, the state's second-largest utility, planned to file its plan with the SCC Thursday, but officials said uncertainty in federal environmental regulations could change its plan dramatically.

—

Dominion is a subsidiary of Dominion Resources Inc.

—

Michael Felberbaum can be reached at <http://www.twitter.com/MLFelberbaum>.

Source URL (retrieved on 08/20/2014 - 11:25pm):

http://www.chem.info/news/2011/09/dominion-files-plan-meet-growing-energy-needs?qt-most_popular=1