



Fossil Gas Plants - Milwaukee area (2024)

Dockets 6630-CE-316 (Paris) and 6630-CE-317 (Oak Creek)

Overview

Wisconsin Electric Power Company (WEPCO) – more commonly known as We Energies – is seeking approval to convert two of its older coal-burning plants, the Elm Road Generating Station in Oak Creek and the Paris Generating Station in Kenosha, into natural gas plants – also known as fossil gas. WEC is petitioning for We Energies ratepayers' to pay for these facilities. We should not be building new fossil fuel infrastructure, especially not at the expense of already-burdened ratepayers!

Methane, the primary component of fossil gas, is an incredibly potent greenhouse gas. [According to NASA](#), despite the relatively small amount of methane in the atmosphere (compared to carbon dioxide), it accounts for one-sixth (around 17%) of recent global warming. Methane has more than 80 times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide over two decades. In addition to its climate impacts, burning methane is bad for human health. Over [200 leading medical journals](#) and over [150 major health organizations](#) have issued joint statements about climate and the [health impacts of fossil fuels](#). **Fossil gas is not a safe alternative to burning coal.**

WEPCO has stated that these gas plants will be in operation for the next 30 years, despite having a goal to be carbon-neutral by 2050. These plans will allow shareholders to continue to profit at the expense of We Energies ratepayers, who are still paying the **2.3 billion dollar price tag** for the Oak Creek coal plant completed in 2011. This is a last-ditch effort by the [most profitable utility in Wisconsin](#) to capitalize on fossil fuels while forcing its [already energy-burdened customers](#) to foot the bill. Instead of creating new fossil fuel infrastructure, utilities should be investing in clean, renewable sources of energy, and working to make clean energy affordable and accessible to ratepayers.

Timeline

This is a rough timeline of public input opportunities, not the complete docket calendar. See the [Paris Docket Events Page](#), [Oak Creek Docket Events Page](#) for more information.

1/29/24 – Docket applications received

7/16/24 – Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Scoping Notice – [Paris](#)

- *Public comment period: 7/16-8/16*

7/22/24 – Environmental Assessment Scoping Notice – [Oak Creek](#)

- *Public comment period: 7/22-8/9*

8/15/24 – PSC Notices – [Paris](#), [Oak Creek](#)

DATE – Paris Draft EIS

- *Public hearings*
- *Public comment period: ?*

DATE – Oak Creek EIS (if applicable)

- *Public hearings*
- *Public comment period*

DATE – Public comment period

DATE – Public hearings

DATE – PSC decision

Talking Points

These projects will...

- 1. Exacerbate Energy Burden:** This is a last-ditch effort by the [most profitable utility in Wisconsin](#) to capitalize on fossil fuels while forcing its [already energy-burdened customers](#) to foot the bill.
 - As the most profitable utility in Wisconsin, We Energies [makes more than double the revenue of the next most profitable utility](#).
 - Racial disparities in energy burden in Milwaukee still remain among the highest in the nation. Black and Hispanic/Latinx neighborhoods each experience more than 2x the energy burden of white neighborhoods.
 - Building these expensive plants is a windfall for power company shareholders, but are harming rate payers.
 - We Energies customers are still paying the **\$2.3 billion price tag** for the company's Oak Creek "Power the Future" coal plant completed in 2011, the most expensive construction project in the history of the state, while shareholders earned about a 12.5% rate of return [profit on that project](#).

- Over the past two years, We Energies has increased its residential energy rates more than 13 percent – [with another potential rate hike on the way](#). These costly fossil gas projects will increase rates even more and result in stranded assets.

2. Worsen Climate Change: Approving these plants would lock us into decades of fossil fuel use during a time we need to be transitioning to renewables, undermining our state's clean energy goals and worsening climate impacts.

- Methane, the primary component of fossil gas, is an incredibly potent greenhouse gas. [According to NASA](#), despite the relatively small amount of methane in the atmosphere (compared to carbon dioxide), it accounts for one-sixth (around 17%) of recent global warming. *Methane has more than 80 times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide over two decades.*
- Climate change is here, and it will continue to get worse as long as we continue “business as usual.”
- The extreme weather events we’re already experiencing -- including historic droughts and floods, extreme heat days, superstorms, record-breaking wildfires, and unprecedented coastal flooding -- will continue to worsen as long as we are reliant on fossil fuels.
- Both President Biden and Governor Evers have made commitments to take action on climate change and to act in alignment with the 2015 Paris Agreement. This requires moving away from fossil fuels, including gas.
 - The State of Wisconsin has a goal for all electricity consumed within the state to be 100 percent carbon-free by 2050 – building new gas plants will undermine this goal.
 - The [Governor’s Task Force on Climate Change Report](#) listed “Avoid new fossil fuel infrastructure” as one of the things we must do in order to stop a climate catastrophe.
- 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, 670 hospitalizations, 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.

- Any new fossil fuel infrastructure will be expensive and lock us into using fossil fuels for *decades*. WEC Energy Group has stated that these gas plants will be in operation for the next 30 years, despite its goal of an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 and achieving carbon-neutral status by 2050
3. **Harm Human Health:** In addition to its climate impacts, burning methane is bad for human health. Over [200 leading medical journals](#) and over [150 major health organizations](#) have issued joint statements about climate and the [health impacts of fossil fuels](#).
- 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. [Premature deaths](#) from burning natural gas have already surpassed deaths from coal in 19 states.
 - Low-income and BIPOC populations often bear a [disproportionate burden of environmental harms](#) and their communities are often [targeted for fossil fuel infrastructure](#), resulting in adverse health outcomes with an increased risk of chronic disease, hospitalizations, and premature death.
 - [National Institutes of Health research](#) shows those living in a zip code with a fossil 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 plants.
 - 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.
 - In 2021, the [World Health Organization](#) declared climate change to be *the single biggest health threat facing humanity*.

Printable Materials

-  [No New Gas - Quarter sheet.pdf](#)
-  [Gas Plants/Vista Sands Flyer.pdf](#) – out of date

Social Media Content

Content	Sample Captions	Graphics - Facebook	Graphics - Instagram	Graphics - X
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TAKE ACTION NOW: Submit Comments to the PSC!  The Public Service Commission (PSC) of Wisconsin is currently considering a request from WEC Energy Group (the parent company of We Energies) to build two new natural gas power plants in Milwaukee County. As climate activists, we know that in order to prevent the worst impacts of climate change, we need to transition away from all fossil fuels, including "natural gas" – also known as fossil gas. We need to make it clear to the PSC that fossil gas is not a safe alternative to coal!  These projects will: • Exacerbate energy burden - Racial disparities in energy burden in Milwaukee still remain among the highest in the nation. • Worsen climate change - Approving these plants would lock us into decades of fossil fuel use during a time we need to be transitioning to renewables, undermining our state's clean energy goals and worsening climate impacts. • Harm human health - Over 200 leading medical journals and over 150 major health organizations have issued joint statements about climate and the health impacts of fossil fuels. 	Take Action Now: Stop Fossil Gas Expansion in WI! The Public Service Commission (PSC) of Wisconsin is currently considering a request from We Energies to build two new fossil gas power plants in Milwaukee County. These proposals must be rejected! Swipe through this post to learn more about why you should take action. Comments are due in ONE WEEK, on August 9th. Visit our website to find sample comments, additional information, and submission links: tinyurl.com/fossilgas350wi	Graphics link Canva link	Graphics link Canva link	Graphics link Canva link
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Sample Blogs, Articles, Etc.



EMAIL BANNER

Final Comment Period

The Public Service Commission (PSC) of Wisconsin is currently considering a request from Wisconsin Electric Power Company (WEPCO) – more commonly known as We Energies – [to build two new natural gas power plants](#) in Milwaukee County. These plants would total 3,000 megawatts of gas, constructing 1,300 megawatts of new power plants and converting nearly 2,000 megawatts of existing coal plants to gas. As climate activists, we know that in order to prevent the worst impacts of climate change, we need to transition away from all fossil fuels, *including* natural gas – also known as fossil gas. We need to make it clear to the PSC that **fossil gas is not a safe alternative to coal!**

We just learned that the public comment period for these two construction dockets has already begun. The Oak Creek comment period ends Friday, August 9th. The Paris Generating Station comment period ends a week later, on August 16th.

We've provided some sample comment language and talking points below for you to use, but we encourage you to make it your own... your comments will have much greater power if they're written in your own words and bring in your own personal experiences and concerns! *Please make sure you comment on both the Oak Creek Facility and the Paris Generating Station.*

[Submit your comment on the Oak Creek Facility by 8/9!](#)

[Submit your comment on the Paris Generating Station by 8/16!](#)

We Energies has stated that these gas plants will be in operation for the next 30 years, despite having a goal to be carbon-neutral by 2050. These plans will allow shareholders to continue to profit at the expense of We Energies ratepayers, who are still paying the **2.3 billion dollar price tag** for the Oak Creek coal plant completed in 2011. This is a last-ditch effort by the [most profitable utility in Wisconsin](#) to capitalize on fossil fuels while forcing its [already energy-burdened customers](#) to foot the bill. Instead of creating new fossil fuel infrastructure, utilities should be investing in clean, renewable sources of energy, and working to make clean energy affordable and accessible to ratepayers.

Let's ensure the PSC hears loud and clear that we will not accept any new fossil fuel infrastructure, especially not at the expense of We Energies ratepayers!

Docket Details:

- [Oak Creek: 6630-CE-317](#)
- [Paris: 6630-CE-316](#)

EA/EIS Scoping

Wisconsin Electric Power Company (WEPCO) – more commonly known as We Energies – is asking for approval from the Public Service Commission (PSC) [to build two new fossil gas power plants](#) in Milwaukee County. These plants would total 3,000 megawatts of gas, constructing 1,300 megawatts of new power plants and converting nearly 2,000 megawatts of existing coal plants to gas. As climate activists, we know that in order to prevent the worst impacts of climate change, we need to transition away from all fossil fuels, *including* fossil gas.

We just learned that the public comment period on the scope of the projects' environmental assessments has begun ([Oak Creek scoping notice](#), [Paris scoping notice](#)). This means we have an opportunity to push PSC staff to do a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that details the negative impacts these projects would have on the local environment, the community's health, and the climate. **The Oak Creek comment period ends Friday, August 9th. The Paris Generating Station comment period ends a week later, on August 16th.**

We've provided some sample comment language and talking points below for you to use, but we encourage you to make it your own... your comments will have much greater power if they're written in your own words and bring in your own personal experiences and concerns!

[Submit your comment on the Oak Creek Facility by 8/9!](#)

[Submit your comment on the Paris Generating Station by 8/16!](#)

There will be additional opportunities to provide input on a draft EIS (definitely for Paris – TBD on Oak Creek) and later on to push the PSC to reject the proposals. Your comments will help ensure the PSC considers the full range of impacts these projects will have, and will help fuel our advocacy later on in the process!

Docket Details:

- [Oak Creek: 6630-CE-317](#)
- [Paris: 6630-CE-316](#)

Action Opportunities

We've provided some sample comment language and talking points, but we encourage you to make it your own... your comments will have much greater power if they're written in your own words and bring in your own personal experiences and concerns! *Please make sure you comment on both the Oak Creek Facility and the Paris Generating Station.*

Final Comment Period

SAMPLE COMMENT:

We encourage you to customize your comment, it'll have an even greater impact!

Dear Public Service Commission of Wisconsin,

I am writing in opposition to Wisconsin Electric Power Company (WEPCO)'s proposals to construct two new gas power plants, pipeline, and LNG storage in Milwaukee County. This plan is deeply flawed: it would exacerbate the energy burden faced by We Energies customers, worsen climate change, lock us into fossil fuel dependence for decades, and negatively impact public health. The construction of these plants would also undermine various objectives of the State of Wisconsin's clean energy plan.

The cost of these gas plants will ultimately fall on We Energies ratepayers, who are already facing severe energy burden. Racial disparities in energy burden in Milwaukee still remain among the highest in the nation, and Black and Hispanic/Latinx neighborhoods each experience more than 2x the energy burden of white

neighborhoods. As the most profitable utility in the state, We Energies has padded the pockets of its shareholders with more than 13% higher rates over the past two years – not including its current rate increase proposal. With the PIPP investigation (Docket No. 05-UI-121) still unresolved, ratepayers quite literally can't afford the rate increase associated with these two projects. Ratepayers are still paying off the \$2.3 billion cost of the Oak Creek coal plant, while shareholders earned a 12.5% rate of return. Instead of building new fossil fuel infrastructure that would disproportionately harm BIPOC and low-income communities' health and finances, utilities should be investing in clean, renewable sources of energy, and working to make clean energy affordable and accessible to ratepayers.

Additionally, the urgency of the climate crisis demands an immediate transition to clean and renewable energy sources like wind and solar – we can't afford to build new fossil fuel infrastructure at this critical juncture. Methane gas is not a clean alternative to coal. Investing in new fossil fuel infrastructure will lock us into decades of reliance on dirty energy. By endorsing this project, we would be making a disastrous mistake that will exacerbate climate change, leading to more severe droughts, floods, heatwaves, and storms in our state. The World Health Organization has identified climate change as the greatest health threat of our time, and the adverse health effects of methane pollution are well-documented, contributing to higher rates of asthma, respiratory illnesses, and premature death – especially in frontline communities in Oak Creek and Paris.

The PSC has a responsibility to reject this proposal. Supporting these projects would not only undermine our efforts to combat climate change, but also perpetuate the cycle of environmental and economic injustices faced by communities of color and low-income neighborhoods. I urge you to stand firm against these harmful projects and instead promote clean energy solutions that align with our state's climate goals.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

Comments on EA/EIS Scoping

Public comments on the environmental assessment (EA) for the Oak Creek Facility are accepted until Friday, August 9

- [Comment on the Oak Creek Facility!](#)

Public comments for the environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Paris Generating Station are accepted until Friday, August 16

- [Comment on the Paris Generating Station!](#)

SAMPLE COMMENT:

We encourage you to customize your comment, it'll have an even greater impact!

I am writing to ask that PSC staff conduct a full and comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed natural gas power plant in Milwaukee County. New fossil fuel infrastructure like this proposed gas plant creates a number of public health and environmental concerns, which should be addressed thoroughly in the EIS.

The EIS should include:

- 1) All direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts from the project on the climate throughout its lifecycle – including the ongoing impacts of Wisconsin's other fossil fuel generating facilities
- 2) Alternatives to using fossil fuels for energy generation and benefits (public health, economic, environmental, climate) to reducing reliance on fossil fuels
- 3) Air and water pollution, and impacts on local ecosystems and wildlife
- 4) Public health impacts of pollution on the local community, and more broadly impacts from climate change on public health
- 5) Environmental justice impacts, including the energy burden outcomes for already-struggling We Energies ratepayers and the impacts of burning fossil fuels on the local community's health

The EIS should also describe how building new fossil fuel infrastructure contradicts Governor Evers' Task Force on Climate Change report that listed "no new fossil fuel infrastructure" including new gas infrastructure as a key solution to stopping the worst impacts of climate change. It is also in direct contradiction to the State of Wisconsin's goal to ensure that all electricity consumed in the state should be 100 percent carbon free by 2050.

Finally, the public comment periods and hearings related to the draft and final EIS should be made public in advance of the comment period to allow for robust and inclusive public engagement in the process.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

Key Resources & Links

Energy Burden in We Energies Service Territory

- ['It's shameful': We Energies customers react to proposed rate hike](#)
- [It's been 3 years since Energy Burden in Milwaukee was released. What has changed?](#)

PSC:

- [Oak Creek - Case Management System - Docket Detail \(wi.gov\)](#)
 - [Oak Creek scoping notice](#)
- [Paris - Case Management System - Docket Detail \(wi.gov\)](#)
 - [Paris scoping notice](#)
 - [Paris RICE CPCN Scoping](#) – Sierra Club's organizational sign-on letter
- [How to Prepare Effective Public Testimony or Public Comment](#)