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ERIC GRUNEBAUM

My name is:
I live at:

Hello Councilors, thank you for your attention. It's helpful to start with a few facts about coal in Massachusetts:

- First, in this state, about 10-20% of our electricity comes from coal. In recent years, our coal use has been declining. However we still have a huge coal burning plant in Somerset, Mass. Brayton Point is the largest coal burning plant in New England and the largest polluter in the state.

- Second, the coal we burn in Mass. is mined primarily in two places – Each week about 80,000 tons of coal is delivered by barge to Brayton Point -- About 1/3rd of it comes from Columbia (in south America) and about 2/3rds comes from West Virginia.

So now that we know we're burning a lot of coal, the question is, what's wrong with it?

So hear are 4 good reasons to stop burning coal and for Cambridge to lead:

Number 1)
The impacts on human health are huge: Coal causes 10s of thousands of premature deaths, 100s of thousands of mercury poisonings, millions of asthma attacks -- as well as cancers and lung diseases.

And these impacts fall disproportionately on the poor where the coal is mined and near where the utilities burn it.

Number 2)
It's not just the human suffering -- the neurotoxins like mercury affecting children's intelligence, the missed work days -- it's also the economic costs of all these diseases.

Estimates from a recent Harvard Medical School study show a cost of about $345B a year. If you put this into the cost of electricity it adds about 18 cents/kWh which makes coal more expensive than wind energy today.

Number 3)

The civil rights of people, particularly in the coal mining and burning areas are infringed. In Columbia, South America and in the Appalachian states, water supplies are poisoned and towns are literally wiped off the map to make way for giant machines which strip mine the coal more cheaply than human labor. This not only ruins communities, it takes away jobs.

And finally, Number 4)
Coal is of course the number one cause of global warming gases and it appears to be cooking the planet. But climatologist James Hanson calls coal the 80% solution. If we can stop burning coal, it will solve 80% of climate change.

So the costs of burning coal are huge and are not paid by the responsible parties -- the utilities and mining cos.

It's time we develop our own clean sources of electricity and put solar on every municipal roof in Cambridge. Let's also aggressively promote solar for residential, institutional, and commercial buildings and let's find other creative ways to generate electricity and spur efficiencies in the city.

If any other industry killed 50 people a year in this state and cost us $345 Billion, you can bet it would be shut down. So let's get on with the business of replacing coal. AND Let's see Camb. Leading The way.

I want to end by suggesting that we look into the <u>overall</u> electricity use in Cambridge - residential, institutional and commercial - and not limit our inquiry to the City's municipal usage.

Thank you for listening, and thanks to Councilors Decker and Vonbeuzacom for introducing this resolution.