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## **72 Lawmakers Unite Behind Dirty, Expensive Coal**

Seventy-two lawmakers (some of them being strong, clean energy supporters) have united behind dirty, expensive coal. Why? This is the question that needs to be asked of the legislators who signed a letter to Governor Granholm on March 19.

[The letter, written by House Speaker Andy Dillon and Minority Leader Kevin Elsenheimer](#), urges Granholm to allow the construction of one or more coal-fired power plants in Michigan – despite the fact that coal-fired power plants are unneeded, extremely expensive, add to global warming pollution and fail to create sustainable, long-term jobs. In other words, coal plants are a waste of our money. Yet more than half of the members of the House of Representatives seem to want to do just that – to allow our scarce financial resources to go up in flames.

In her State of the State address, governor Granholm announced a critically important executive order to protect Michigan citizens from expensive and unnecessary energy costs. Executive Order 2009-2 requires all proposals for dirty coal-fired power plants, to be re-analyzed to first prove there is a need for the power, and then to prove there are not any cleaner, cheaper and better alternatives to meet that need. This ensures that Michigan citizens get the best deal for their energy dollar. Without this requirement, companies like Consumers Energy could dramatically increase residential ratepayers' electric bills to pay for dirty, unneeded power -- and we'll have no choice but to pay for it.

Granholm's action is in alignment with a package of energy bills passed by the legislature last year affecting Michigan's two major utilities, DTE and Consumers Energy. The legislation ensures that proposed energy investments are needed, cost-effective, adequately protect the environment and create the most jobs. Her executive order imposes the same requirement on other energy providers like Lansing Board of Water and Light, Holland Board of Public Works, Wolverine Power Cooperative and others.

The executive order helps ensure that we invest first in clean, alternative energy such as wind, solar and energy efficiency – which create far more jobs, dramatically reduces financial risk and costs, and doesn't pollute. And not building new, dirty coal plants will keep jobs here in Michigan, instead of shipping trainloads of money to mining companies to buy coal for these polluting plants.

However, the letter signed by the 72 House members urges Governor Granholm to rescind her order and allow the permitting and construction of coal-fired power plants. Four coal plants are currently waiting in line for permission to be constructed and then pollute.

Lawmakers who signed the letter need to be asked "WHY?"