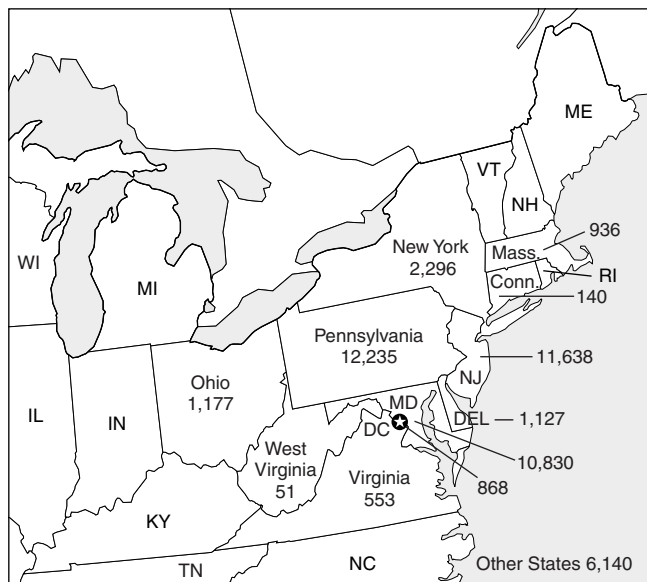


FIGURE 1

Electric Output Capacity (Megawatts) of 103 Generating Plants Sold in Y2000, and Reclassified as ‘Unregulated’



Source: Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy.

in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland alone. The figure has the particulars of sales in these states, to document the point: The process of re-categorizing plants over to an unregulated status, just paves the way for California-style chaos, in terms of fostering speculation, unreliability, and hyperinflation.

Spring Energy Cutoffs, Protests Mounting

by Mary Jane Freeman

Since our coverage of last week, the number of households at risk of having their utility and/or energy shut off has continued to climb, and organized protests have begun. Most states' Winter moratoriums on shutoffs have ended, and daily reports show the magnitude of the potential harm, due to the super-profits being raked in by energy conglomerates under deregulation, is much greater than previously reported.

- In Philadelphia, citizen and city council pressure on PGW, the city's main utility company, won a ten-day delay in effecting disconnect actions. At risk, immediately, are

7,200 customers whose bills are over \$750 and more than 90 days old. City Councilwoman Marian Tasco asks PGW to do more, i.e., to hold face-to-face meetings and give people 72 hours thereafter to work out a payment plan. PGW has a total of 200,000 customers, 43% of its clientele, who are not current on bills. Of those, 70,000 are in its low-income program, and 20,000 of those have payment plans, but the remainder, 50,000, do not, and therefore are at risk of cutoff soon.

- In Chicago, a minimum of 10,000 households faced April 16 shutoffs, with delays being negotiated on a day-to-day basis by protests involving the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr. Another 30,000 households may be cut off by May 1. On April 12, former Illinois State Treasurer Pat Quinn filed a petition with the Illinois Commerce Commission to ban gas utilities cutoffs for the next 150 days. The petition, signed by 10,000 people, states that cutoffs pose a serious health threat. The ICC has set a hearing for April 24 on the petition.

Illinois cutoffs of an estimated 6,000 households began as of April 9. Peoria township supervisor Joe Whalen said that the town's relief office has run out of funds. "It wasn't the first year" this has happened, but "we have never had anything deluge us like this. . . . Many of these were people on fixed incomes who had never in their lives asked for help," but this Winter "they found themselves up against a wall." A relief worker in the area put it this way: "The utility problem has put the American dream on hold."

- As of April 16, almost 40,000 households in St. Paul, Minnesota, serviced by only one of the state's energy providers, are in jeopardy of having their energy service disconnected due to unpaid bills. Another provider, Minnegasco, reports delinquent accounts have risen sharply. Statewide, the shutoffs are in the hundreds of thousands. Cutoffs will effect customers who use electric- and natural gas-regulated utility services. The Public Utility Commission estimates that of the 2.1 million households served by regulated utilities, 100,000 are in arrears and face cutoffs. The 51 rural electric cooperatives serve almost 910,000 households, for which data on arrearages are not collected. But, they report a 45% increase in delinquent accounts this year over last, and that disconnect notices began going out as of April 9.

- Thousands are at risk in Jackson, Mississippi, where the non-profit community group, Unify Souls, Inc., which screens people seeking aid to pay bills, reports being overwhelmed with new requests. The head of the Department of Human Resources told Doris Rhodes, head of Unify Souls, that as of April 15 all state and Federal funds were exhausted. Unify Souls has called for a protest rally and march to the legislature on April 27.

- Citizen action in New Orleans secured a one-week postponement of cutoffs, to April 24. LaRouche activist Marty Rowland and the Citizens For Change plan further actions.