

## Senator Scott Newman

1. What do you believe is the role of an electric cooperative in the community?

To provide reliable and affordable electrical power to rural Minnesota. Residents rely on electrical power for heat, lights, security and simply the ability to live the rural lifestyle. Access to this same electrical power allows commercial enterprises to locate and flourish in a rural setting. In that sense, electrical coops are essential to the economic vitality of outstate Minnesota. In summary, for those of us who live and work in rural areas, electrical coops are a must.

2. Do you believe the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) should be involved in setting rates, fees and charges for unregulated electric cooperatives that are governed by their consumers (members) through a member-elected Board of Directors?

No. The PUC is a perfect example of the overreach of the Minnesota regulatory scheme which has become increasingly burdensome on all Minnesotans. Coop rate payers (members) have direct access to their elected representatives who are accountable to them. No such accountability exists with the PUC.

3. What is your stance on the net metering laws in Minnesota? Do you believe electric cooperatives should be required to buy excess generation from members who own distributed generation? Do you think it is fair to require electric cooperatives to pay the retail rate rather than the lower rate at which they purchase power from the market (wholesale rate)?

I suspect the requirement to buy excess power is the government's way of encouraging "green energy". However, I view it as unnecessary interference by the government in forcing the coops to participate in a program rather than participate by mutual agreement. No I do not agree coops should be mandated to purchase at the retail rate, the effect of which is to force consumers like myself to subsidize the cost of building the member owned generation equipment. At a minimum the coop's responsibility should be to purchase excess power at the wholesale rate but a better option would be to eliminate the government mandate entirely.

4. Right now, Renville-Sibley Co-op Power is trying to balance environmental goals with reliability and affordability. Are you concerned that the Clean Power Plan and additional proposed regulations in Minnesota will tip this balance away from affordability for our members?

I am very concerned. We have many years of coal reserves which will provide us with an affordable reliable energy source and with today's technology be environmentally safe. Further, I can't imagine energy sources like wind and solar, irrespective of the significant rate increases they will bring to consumers, can possibly provide us with the energy needed for our rural commercial enterprises. The clean power plan is an economic disaster for rural Minnesota and I do not support it.

5. What is the biggest issue facing your district and how will you help alleviate this issue?

Health Insurance is number 1. Rising costs have now put health insurance out of reach for many. MNSure is the culprit. Not a single republican voted for it while Dayton and the DFL Senate refuse to admit it's a problem. Resolution of health care costs will be up to the voters by sending legislators to St Paul who will fix it. Transportation funding is number 2. Southwest Light Rail (SWLR) from MPLS to Eden Prairie at \$100M/mile is the keystone. Resolve it and money for transportation will follow. Hearings to determine the cost of maintenance, operation, ridership, future subsidies and possible alternatives to SWLR is the solution. As the minority lead on the Senate Transportation Committee, I will insist we hold those hearings.