



February 18th, 2021

Re: Testimony in Opposition to SCR 4012

Chairman Kreun, and members of the Committee, my name is Ryan Warner. I am the co-owner of Lightspring, an energy technology company in Bismarck.

SCR 4012 seeks to address issues of “grid reliability”. If implemented, it will attempt to create “price transparency” by manipulating federal electricity markets. This manipulation is aimed at establishing the “inherent value” of coal and other so-called “dispatchable” sources of electricity until carbon capture or other low emission technology comes to market.

Within this resolution there are 4 pages attesting to the supposed benefits of dispatchable sources of electricity and exactly ZERO pages speaking to the costs.

If you were in accountant school and tried to determine the value of something and only considered the benefits and not the cost, you would be flunked out. In essence, this is what SCR 4012 does - it speaks to the benefits and hides all the costs.

In fact, the cost of burning fossil fuels is actually why we are gathered in this room today. This is because burning fossil fuels makes the planet sick.

Sure, there are debates to be had about the extent of the sickness; debates about how to most effectively address the sickness, and many reasonable people disagree as to when the sickness may become a terminable illness. But what is not in question is that our behavior is making us sick.

Now, “value” can take many different forms. Some may value gold, some may value soybeans, and some may value bitcoin, but in general “value” as a concept is simply the measure of community agreement. As such, it cannot be forced or manipulated into existence by resolution or law, but instead emerges organically out of community consent. Right now, there is general agreement within the market and within society at large that the “value” of fossil fuels is in decline.

SCR 4012 seeks to deny these realities. It seeks to create “value” by force and by words, by considering only the benefits of fossil fuels, and by neglecting any of the costs of climate change. While price transparency is a laudable goal, all this resolution wants to do is hide the cost of pollution.

But, “value” can only be truly developed via consensus. As such, I urge this committee to continue this conversation, and to investigate how North Dakotans can come together

and agree on a shared path forward. Further, I encourage this committee to listen to every voice and try to find a middle ground that honors all perspectives. If we do that, we could truly move forward together into the future. As such, I recommend continued study of the issues of “grid reliability”, one that includes a full account of all the benefits and all the costs of maximizing the sizable natural resources of North Dakota.

Thank you for your time.