Summary: Rocky Mountain Power continues to be reluctant in switching from coal to clean renewable energy as its power source. This article talks about the reasons why Rocky Mountain Power should switch to a new source and the hazards/effects of the continued use of coal in Utah.

Analysis: This article pertains to **macroeconomics1** (the study of economy-wide phenomena, including inflation, unemployment, and economic growth) because it has to do with the society of Utah as a whole. Rocky Mountain Power is a **monopoly2** (the only supplier of a unique product with no close substitutes) in Utah because it is the only source of electrical power and there is only one large **firm3** (a business organization, such as a corporation, limited liability company or partnership, that sells goods or services to make a profit) in the industry. Rocky Mountain Power has a high **market demand4** (the total quantity of a good or service people are willing and able to buy at alternative prices in a given time period) because the residences of Utah have no **availability of substitutes5** (the more substitutes available the more elastic the demand) for sources of power, making it impossible for people to switch companies even if they are against the way Rocky Mountain Power produces it electricity.

In 2016, the EPA wanted Rocky Mountain Power’s two biggest plants to add selective catalytic reduction to make their emissions cleaner. However, the **total costs6** (the sum of all payments made to the firm’s fixed and variable factors of production) and **marginal costs7** (the additional cost associated with adding 1 additional quantity) were going to be very high for the company. Then, in 2017 the Trump administration halted the process of adding the selective catalytic reduction. The **demand8** (the ability and willingness to buy specific quantities of a good at alternative prices in a given time period, ceteris paribus) for clean renewable energy sources is very prudent in this generation, so when the intuitive to add the selective catalytic reduction was stopped, people were not happy. However, there can’t be a **buyer’s reservation price9** (the largest dollar amount the buyer would be willing to pay for a good) because Rocky Mountain power is a monopoly.

People in Utah, especially this generation, are taking about how the pollution and emissions that Rocky Mountain power produces are negatively affecting the environment and their health. Specifically, the environments around our national parks. The pollution that Utah sees so much of is negatively impacting the 1.7 billion industry that our state parks bring in. This means the pollution is the **opportunity cost10** (the value of the next best option or the value of the next best alternative choice sacrificed) for Utah residences to have electricity. Although, more and more people in Utah are taking a stand because their **incentives11** (something that induces a person to act), being how bad the pollution is getting and directly affecting them, are driving them to make a change. If this continues, Rocky Mountain Power could go into **market failure12** (when the market fails to allocate society’s resources efficiently) because of the **externality13** (when the production or consumption of a good affects bystanders) of pollution. This day in age, we have certain **technology14** (the practical applications of scientific knowledge) that can help reduce the amount of emissions/pollution like CO2 and NOx by plants that use coal as a **resource15** (anything that can be used to produce a good or service). Thus, why people want to make a change in the electrical power industry.

Rocky mountain power makes a high **total revenue16** (the total amount paid to producers for a good or service) because they are a monopoly. However, people are not only taking a stand on pollution and coal emission based on the environment but also on human health. NOx emissions have contributed to causing asthma attacks, heart attacks, birth defects and even death. This is making the **utility17** (the pleasure, satisfaction, or need fulfillment that a consumer obtains from his or her consumption of a good or service) of having electricity not so pleasurable for society.

This generation wants to find a clean way to produce electricity but that also means that Rocky Mountain Power would have to pay more money to run their plants making them not use **productive efficiency18** (least costly production techniques are used to produce wanted goods and services) to produce their electricity. We all know that big companies, especially monopolies, want to produce a large quantity of product in the least costly way. Overall, electrical power companies all over the country are a huge part of the **economy19** (the wealth and resources of a country or region, especially in terms of the production and consumption of goods and services) and we need electricity. However, the **factors of production20** (an input used in the production of a good or service such as labor, capital, and raw materials) need to change in the electrical power industry if we want to make our environment and health better in Utah and everywhere.

The continued reluctance of Rocky Mountain Power to [control the emission of toxic pollutants](https://archive.sltrib.com/article.php?id=58477116&itype=CMSID) from coal fired electric generating units (EGU’s) is of great concern for a number of reasons.

1.It causes significant human caused haze and visibility impairment to all of Utah’s national parks which negatively impacts the economic viability of the gateway communities around the parks. The combined economic output generated by the parks is in the region of $1.7 billion.

2. The impact of nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions on human health and environmental degradation is a toll which often appears intangible but is very real. We are talking about asthma attacks, heart attacks, birth defects and deaths as well as the effects of acid rain as a direct result.

3. In 2016 the EPA designated that both the Hunter and Huntington plants (total 4 EGU’s) need to have selective catalytic reduction (SCR) converters fitted to effectively reduce NOx emissions. The costs for this process cannot be characterized as an add-on but rather be calculated into the true cost of fossil fuel generated electricity. These emission controls also cannot be negated or offset by citing the closure of other older plants coming off-line.

Unfortunately, in 2017, the Trump administration and the state of Utah halted implementation of these necessary technologies, at the behest of Rocky Mountain Power.

It is time for Utah to shift from coal to clean renewable energy generation. The comparison between the two is becoming a no-brainer where the cost of renewable energy keeps coming down while at the same time creating jobs at an impressive rate. Coal is trending in the opposite direction and has lasting impact on our health and environment which we will be paying for years to come.