

Speech Before the Allendale Township Board on 9/23/2024: “Save The Campbell”

I am from Georgetown Township and lead the “Save the Campbell” effort. The Jamestown Township Board has approved the letter asking Consumers Energy to delay the closure and demolition of the Campbell electric generating plant past 2025. The Georgetown Township Utilities Committee of the Township Board unanimously approved drafting a request letter to delay its closure. We are also receiving positive indications from other town boards in the county. I thank this board for deliberating this important topic.

Consumers Energy, working with MPSC, has sound legal and practical grounds to delay the closure given the following facts:

1. The regional grid operator MISO indicates “a growing capacity deficit beginning in the 2025/26 planning year”. So MISO is requesting delay of plant closures to avert major problems in the coming years.¹
2. Great strides in commercialization of CO2 sequestration technology have been made in recent years, making it possible to meet atmospheric carbon dioxide levels without demolishing coal and other fossil fuel plants,² for those concerned about this issue.
3. The Department of Energy is nearing commercialized use of coal plant by-products to provide rare earth minerals like lithium and cobalt which are necessary for making batteries.³
4. Given rising electric use, we need more not less electric generating capacity to meet policy goals. We simply cannot afford closing a plant like Campbell which provides electric for 1 million regional residents.⁴
5. The Campbell is far less polluting than East Michigan’s Monroe plant, yet Monroe is remaining open to 2032. If environment is the concern, Monroe should close in 2025 and Campbell remain open to 2032.

Consumers Energy may say that they bought the Covert generating plant to make up for the loss of the Campbell plant, but they bought it from another party which had been operating it. The purchase did nothing to help the regional grid by adding new electric generating capacity. In fact, new Michigan law makes building new gas plants largely cost prohibitive.

Please see the handout “Why Does Closing and Demolishing the Campbell in 2025 Not Make Economic Sense?”⁵ Observe there how there are no good alternatives to keeping the Campbell open to 2032. For example, the leading outside experts say Palisades nuclear plant cannot be safely re-started in 2025, and maybe never; and our grid operator says solar and wind are not reliable.

Some bewail the 2025 closure of the Campbell plant but say Ottawa County can do nothing to stop it. This is simply wrong. There are a number of effective legal options the county can pursue, including possible legal action, the County effectively stepping into the role of regulator of Consumers Energy, municipalization of the Campbell plant and placing it in an electric cooperative, and others. But before worrying about the next step, our focus now should be getting every town and county board in the county requesting delay of closure. Consumers Energy needs to understand that we want to have a good long-term working relation, but that will require Consumers Energy acceding to our determination to keep the Campbell plant open past 2025. We can then pray to God that they change their mind.

We should not rest until every town board and the county board unite in requesting Consumers Energy delay closure and demolition of the Campbell, lest we lose reliable, affordable electric and become like so much of the Third World.⁶

Thanks so much for your consideration of this request.

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SaveTheCampbell.com

¹ <https://www.misoenergy.org/meet-miso/media-center/2024/oms-miso-survey-results-indicate-tight-resource-capacity-in-the-upcoming-planning-year/>

² <https://savethecampbell.com/separate-carbon-capture-option-possible/>

³ <https://www.tdworld.com/electrification/article/21283105/batteries-from-coal-waste-doe-funds-projects-to-extract-rare-earth-metals-from-coal-byproducts>

⁴ <https://savethecampbell.com/more-evidence-the-grid-cannot-absorb-precipitous-closures-like-the-campbell/>

⁵ <https://savethecampbell.com/why-does-closing-and-demolishing-the-campbell-in-2025-not-make-economic-sense/>

⁶ Draft request letter: <https://savethecampbell.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/request-to-delay-the-closure-of-Campbell-plant.pdf>