

5/4/09: Letter to the Editor Durango Herald

Members of La Plata Electric Association received a letter last week concerning probable increases in electric rates over time with the passage of the American Clean Energy & Security Act of 2009, draft federal legislation promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency and establishing a 'cap and trade' process to regulate and reduce carbon emissions.

There is no doubt that electricity, no matter how it is produced, is going to cost more. And for good reason: among other things, our electric grid must be upgraded to 21<sup>st</sup> Century scope and technology. This will benefit all of us and eventually, enable technology to help us minimize our own individual consumption of electricity.

So, given that costs will go up, what can you do? Conservation and efficiency are good starts. Switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs when a bulb needs replacing. Buy the most efficient appliance you can afford when the time comes to replace your present unit. Turn out the lights when you leave a room for more than a few minutes. There are hundreds more. LPEA itself has employees who can help you reduce your consumption of electricity, and the League of Women Voters website, [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org), has white papers on this topic.

Let's face it. We haven't been paying the full costs to society for the use of any raw material in the production of electricity. Reducing energy consumption will also help us keep our air clean. 'How's the Air Out There? Outdoor Air Quality in the Eastern Four Corners Region,' a new brochure produced by the Mountain Studies Institute explains in lay terms our outdoor air quality, its impacts on human health, some ways you can reduce your energy usage and offers a number of sources for additional information. You can get a copy now by calling them at 970-247-7071 or downloading it from their website [www.mountainstudies.org](http://www.mountainstudies.org).

Get on the bandwagon. Start reducing your electricity use now before the rates go up.

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