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**Sierra Club Iowa Chapter Concerned About Dandekar Appointment to Iowa Utilities Board**

Des Moines – The appointment of State Sen. Swati Dandekar to the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) by Governor Terry Branstad raises serious concerns.

“The Iowa Utilities Board has the duty to regulate public utilities to protect the public interest,” said Iowa Chapter Legal Chair Wally Taylor. “Swati Dandekar has demonstrated that she will favor the utilities at the expense of the public interest.”

Highlighting the Sierra Club’s objection to Sen. Dandekar’s appointment to the IUB is her leading role in marshalling a bill in the Iowa Senate earlier this year that would have given MidAmerican Energy special rules to build a new nuclear power plant in Iowa. A similar bill passed the House.

“If this bill had passed, MidAmerican Energy customers would be forced to pay for the nuclear plant before it was built,” said Neila Seaman, Iowa Chapter director. “It would have allowed MidAmerican Energy to keep the increased payments even if the plant was never built.”

In addition, the bill would have imposed requirements on the IUB and special rules for MidAmerican Energy in determining the rate structure for a new nuclear plant, all favoring MidAmerican’s plans to build the plant.

Nuclear energy is not a silver bullet to reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Despite the temptation to label nuclear reactors as a viable solution to global warming and meeting our electricity demands, nuclear power is a bad choice because it is dirty, unsafe, deadly and costly.

“Renewable energy and distributed generation are the best solutions to providing reliable and sustainable energy to Iowans,” said Mike Carberry, an energy policy advocate with the Iowa Chapter. “The IUB can be a major force in this clean energy transition, but it is doubtful that Sen. Dandekar will further this effort.”

The IUB should be leading the transition from fossil fuels to energy efficiency, conservation and renewable energy. The Iowa Chapter is concerned that Sen. Dandekar’s commitment to dirty and unsafe energy strategies will prevent the state from moving into clean and renewable 21<sup>st</sup> Century energy policies.

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