

ENERGY MATTERS

Interest In Cogeneration Is Heating Up

(NAPSA)—Upon flipping that electric switch, few consumers give much thought to where the juice to power the lights and air conditioning comes from. A large amount of California's electricity, for example, comes from a technology called cogeneration: just over 7,000 megawatts of electricity—enough to power all the homes and businesses in San Diego for a year.

What is cogeneration? It's a process used by industry, universities and even hospitals to use one source of energy—natural gas—and derive two benefits from it. Natural gas comes into the facility, and then is converted to electricity to run that facility. As that is happening, thermal heat and steam are generated to power equipment and machinery. If the facility does not use all the electricity it generates, that electricity goes back to the electrical grid for use by consumers. Cogen increases the amount of electricity available for California and is helping to stabilize the price of energy consumed in the state.

Cogeneration has been an important part of California's energy scene for more than 20 years. It's a proven, reliable system that makes California businesses more competitive, keeps people employed, is good for the environment and makes consumers less dependent on electricity generated out-of-state. With the possibility of power shortages looming as the weather heats up, policies that support the use of cogeneration will help keep the lights on.

Presently, key California policymakers are making important decisions about where the state's utility companies will obtain their



Experts say cogeneration facilities that produce both heat and power help keep electricity available for industry and consumers.

electricity in the future. If their plans do not include purchasing power from cogenerators, then the future of existing cogenerators and development of new cogeneration is at risk.

Without public policy support for cogen, California may:

- Be more reliant on less-efficient power sold by out-of-state merchant generators.
- Face greater demand for scarce natural resources and use more natural gas.
- See its major job-providing industries become less efficient and less competitive and lose a major tool to control costs.
- Suffer from lost efficiency in refining, manufacturing and processing and in the cogeneration industry which directly employs tens of thousands of Californians.

So the next time you switch on the TV or the lights, think about where that power comes from. Cogenerated power is good for consumers, businesses, the state and the nation.

To learn more about cogeneration, visit www.cogenworks.com.