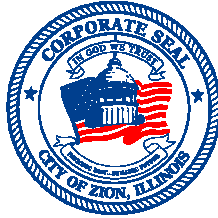


City of Zion

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"Historic Past - Dynamic Future"

The City of Zion is located on the shores of Lake Michigan in northeast Illinois; just minutes from the Wisconsin border, and is home to 24,655 people. It was also home to the Zion Nuclear Power Station from 1974 to 1998 where it provided power to Chicago and the northern quarter of Illinois. The plant brought thousands of jobs to the community, contributed heftily to the local economy and was crucial to the foundation that helped the City thrive during those years.

Residents of Zion, myself included, grew up with the two cooling towers being in their family photos at the beach and part of the City's skyline. It was just a part of life in Zion. We trusted that those responsible for the plant were monitoring the risks and keeping us safe. We accepted that the plant was a part of our landscape knowing that the jobs kept food on the table of Zion residents and many others. We understood that the plant kept the lights on in tens of thousands of homes extending far beyond our City borders. It was for the greater good.

Unfortunately, that came to an abrupt end when ComEd decided that they could not justify the necessary safety upgrades to continue to produce competitively priced power and decided to permanently close the plant. The community was totally blindsided as this was well in advance of the slated expiration of their license in 2013. Almost overnight, the plant closed, the jobs disappeared and the lakefront and City were permanently blighted. Those who had been part of our City for decades were gone and we were left wondering if those that had watched out for us would continue to do so. Whether those from beyond our borders, who had benefited from the risks the City had taken, would be there to help us in our time of need. Would anyone care that we were left as a nuclear waste storage site? Now, over two and a half decades later, with 2.2 million pounds of nuclear waste sitting in our City only 400 yards from the shore of Lake Michigan, we now know the answer.

At the time of closure in 1998, the Zion Nuclear Power Station provided almost \$19 million annually in property taxes to support the local schools, City services and other governmental entities that the public relied upon. The historical value and taxes collected are shown in Attachment 1. The plant made up over half of our entire tax base. When that foundation disappeared from our tax base, it did nothing to reduce the costs of education of our students, nor did it reduce the costs of our police, fire, rescue and infrastructure. The service demands of the public remained steady. Therefore, the tax burden that was largely paid by the plant instead shifted to the residents and business resulting in a 30% increase in tax bills. There was little to no value in the now vacant plant and there was no opportunity to replace that tax base with redevelopment on what would normally be 90 acres of lakefront property as shown in Attachment 2. This resulted in a cycle, which continues to this day, of property values dropping as a result of taxes significantly increasing. Property values became so depressed that large landlord groups were buying 40-50 homes at a time to rent out. Many of these groups failed to maintain

these properties while they collected cash flow, and then moved on to the next. At the peak, over 60% of our housing stock were rental properties, which is triple that of a healthy community. The demand on our schools and City services skyrocketed while our resources continued to dwindle. The tax rate over the 20 years since closure almost tripled while the plant was decommissioned and the waste remains on our lakeshore in the heart of our community.

That brings us to where we are at today, with over 2.2 million pounds of nuclear waste stranded in our backyard next to the lake that provides drinking water for over 10 million people, as shown in Attachment 3. Ours is not an isolated case. There are over 30 reactors that have been or are in the process of decommissioning and another 56 that are currently operating in 28 States. Many of the Senators on the Committee are or will be facing this same issue. It's clear that a resolution to nuclear waste storage needs to be addressed, but that is not for me to address the solution, nor is it the issue before us today. That answer has been debated for decades, however until a decision is reached, we are the end solution. We have become, against our will, a nuclear storage site, and the community of Zion has been irreparably damaged without recognition and without compensation.

We humbly ask that Congress help us to start to repair those damages with this legislation. This is not a new concept for Congress as the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 was passed with strong bipartisan support and recognized that there should be impact assistance payments to units of local government to "mitigate social or economic impacts occasioned by the establishment and subsequent operation of any interim storage capacity". Congress acknowledged again in 2020 that assistance was essential to nuclear closure communities with the adoption of the EDA Nuclear Closure Communities program. However, that program required us to inflate our budget with matching dollars that we don't have for projects that would not address our inability to compete and recover. We have become very good at being fiscally responsible and do not want to spend funds unless it would address the crisis. The STRANDED Act of 2022 fixes these limitations and provides us that opportunity by permitting us to address the inequities in our local tax base and begin to dig out of the hole that the plant closure put us into.

We are not asking for a handout but rather to just be able to survive. We are a prideful City and want to be self-sufficient. However, over 20 years of fighting this battle alone has left it impossible for us to do so. Our goal is to utilize this funding to address our tax issues and make it possible to compete to attract residents and businesses to our community and begin the rebuilding process. All of these plants across the United States produce nearly 20% of the Country's electrical needs. We ask that, while the people of the nation might not acknowledge us when their lights turn on, that they remember us before ours turn off forever. It's for the greater good.