

Branstad, Reynolds fight onerous RICE rule on behalf of Iowans, EPA accepts their alternative

Written by Jimmy Centers

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Changes will save families, businesses and communities significant initial and annual costs

(DES MOINES) – The Governor’s Office today announced the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has accepted Gov. Terry E. Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds’ alternative to the RICE rule. After signing an Executive Order, meeting with EPA head Lisa Jackson, and pushing for the elimination of burdensome regulations, Branstad has secured significant savings for Iowa families, businesses and communities.

“Lieutenant Governor Reynolds and I made a commitment to Iowans when we took office to fight burdensome government regulations regardless if they came from the state or federal government,” said Branstad. “Recognizing this unnecessary onerous rule would raise costs on Iowa families, I signed [Executive Order 72](#) to rescind the Iowa’s adoption of the rule. I am pleased to learn the Environmental Protection Agency has listened to my concerns over the rule and opted against requiring generators to be retrofitted with expensive components.”

Average Iowa families faced the potential of hundreds of dollars in utility bills if the RICE rule would have been implemented. As the RICE rule was originally written, back-up diesel generators used by municipal utilities in several of Iowa’s rural communities would be required to be retrofitted with very expensive new parts, even though the engines are rarely used. These new requirements would have meant higher utility costs for residents in sixty-seven Iowa communities.

“This is an issue that came up in one of our town hall meetings, and the governor and I pledged to take action,” said Lt. Gov. Reynolds. “This is the benefit of visiting all 99 counties each year and listening to the concerns of Iowans.”

Gov. Branstad met with EPA head Lisa Jackson on June 20, 2011, to express his concerns over the costs being passed on to Iowans. Branstad explained that the costs of retrofitting the generators, which would be passed on to Iowa consumers, were extraordinarily high given the little amount the generators are used each year and the rule should be rescinded.

Yesterday, the Governor’s Office was informed the EPA finalized changes to the RICE Rule

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which will help keep utility costs low for hard-working Iowa families. Specifically, the EPA updated the rule with a broader usage definition of emergency use, which will allow utility companies to use these important back-up engines during winter storms or power outages, without necessarily having to retrofit the engines with the expensive new components.

According to the Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities, the following communities/municipal utilities utilize diesel engines and would be affected by the RICE rule: Algona, Alta, Anita, Atlantic, Bancroft, Bellevue, Bloomfield, Brooklyn, Cascade, Coggon, Coon Rapids, Corning, Dayton, Denison, Dike, Durant, Earlville, Estherville, Forest City, Cowrie, Graettinger, Grand Junction, Greenfield, Grundy Center, Harlan, Hopkinton, Independence, Indianola, La Porte City, Lake Mills, Lake Park, Lamosi, Laurens, Lenox, Manning, Maquoketa, McGregor, Milford, Montezuma, Mount Pleasant, New Hampton, Ogden, Onawa, Osage, Panora, Pella, Pocahontas, Preston, Primghar, Rock Rapids, Rockford, Sibley, Strawberry Point, Story City, Stuart, Summer, Tipton, Traer, Villisca, Vinton, Waverly, West Bend, West Liberty, Whittemore, Wilton and Winterset.

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