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For Immediate Release  
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August 29, 2018

## **Congressman Duffy Responds to Cooperative Concerns**

Congressman Duffy recently met with cooperative personnel from Barron Electric, Chippewa Valley Electric, Dairyland Power, Polk Burnett, and the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association. Congressman Duffy's district includes 13 electric cooperatives, whose main goal is to safely provide their members with reliable and affordable electricity. Topics discussed included the Pension Bill, Cushion of Credit, Spent Nuclear Fuel, and Nemadji Energy Trail.

Electric cooperatives serve the poorest, most rural parts of the country. To maintain affordable electric rates in these high-cost areas, co-ops have access to low-cost financing through the Rural Utilities Service Electric Loan program. The changes to the Cushion of Credit, which is in the Senate's version of the Farm Bill, could cost cooperative members about \$4.5 million a year, about a third of which would be paid by electric cooperative members in Congressman Duffy's district. Barron Electric Director Mike Baker remarked, "We want to continue working together on a Farm Bill that electric cooperatives can support."

H.R. 3053, the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2018, is instrumental in revitalizing the federal used nuclear fuel program by moving the Yucca Mountain project forward, as well as providing the U.S. Department of Energy with clarifying authority to fund and develop consolidated interim storage facilities. Utilities and customers have paid over \$40 billion into the Nuclear Waste Fund. Passage of this amendment would help place the federal government on a path to fulfill its responsibilities and to unburden taxpayers of the ever-mounting liability by establishing a durable program for managing used nuclear fuel.

Dairyland Power's Nathan Franklin remarked, "Dairyland Power and Minnesota Power/ALLETE have proposed building a 525-550 megawatt natural gas combined cycle power plant in Superior, Wisconsin. The Nemadji Trail Energy Center will support Minnesota Power and Dairyland Power's diversification goals and will reduce reliance on coal facilities and support increased investment in renewables. It will also provide grid stabilization in northwest Wisconsin, which has no major power plants."

The Retirement Enhancement and Savings Act (S. 2526/H.R. 5282) was also discussed. These acts would help protect electric cooperative employee retirement benefits and stop the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation from grossly overcharging cooperative pension plans.

Congressman Duffy thanked participants for their questions and indicated that he would look into their concerns.

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