



Bettendorf Library

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Exelon bill dead for this session

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A bill aimed at helping Exelon's money-losing nuclear plants in the Quad-Cities and Clinton, Ill., likely won't make it out of the spring session, but the company hasn't yet confirmed it will close the two plants.

The bill's main sponsor, Sen. Donne Trotter, D-Chicago, has pulled the plug on the legislation, according to a report in the News-Gazette of Champaign. The newspaper quoted him as saying

that time had run out.

A Quad-Cities Chamber of Commerce official also said Tuesday that he has been told the bill is dead for the spring session. The session was scheduled to end Tuesday.

"The general consensus is that it's dead for this session," said Henry Marquard, director of government relations for the chamber. He said that he had spoken with an aide to Trotter, as well as others at the Capitol.

Exelon had said that, if legisla-

tion wasn't passed by the end of the spring session, it would close its plant in Clinton in 2017 and the one in the Quad-Cities in 2018.

Bill Stoermer, a spokesman for the Quad-City plant, did not comment on the legislation Tuesday. But, in an email, he said: "We will have a formal statement later this week."

Despite the apparent failure of the legislation for this session, Marquard said he's hopeful it can be resurrected in the fall session. Even though Exelon gave a spring

session deadline for the bill to be passed, he said the Quad-City plant is not closed yet.

"We're just going to keep fighting until they literally close the thing," he said.

Some supporters of the plan are hopeful that Exelon can be persuaded to extend its deadline, the News-Gazette article said.

The Cordova plant employs more than 800 people in the Quad-City region, and there had been an intense effort to get lawmakers to pass a bill Exelon said would put it

on an even footing with other energy providers. The bill also would establish a surcharge on utility customers that would help the nuclear plants, which Exelon said have lost more than \$800 million over the past seven years.

Consumer groups, as well as others, had objected to the legislation, calling it a bailout for a profitable company.

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Endangered mussel species being relocated



Sheepnose mussel



Higgins eye pearlymussel



Spectaclecase mussel

KEVIN E. SCHMIDT, QUAD-CITY TIMES

Beginning in July, an estimated half million endangered mussels will be moved to make way for the new Interstate-74 bridge. It will be one of the largest relocations in U.S. history, officials say, with a price tag that could run more than \$3 million. Most of the work will be done along the Illinois shoreline, near Sylvan Slough, but some will take place on the Iowa side, too.

Moving the mussels

Half a million mussels to be relocated for I-74 bridge project

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Beginning in July, the first of an estimated half million mussels are expected to be relocated from the Mississippi River as part of the Interstate-74 bridge project.

When the removal is finished, an official said, it will be one of the largest mussel relocations in U.S. history.

The I-74 bridge has been in the planning stages for years, and

removal of the mussels has long been contemplated. But with builders preparing to begin work next year on installing the 14 piers that will support the new span, the time for the mussel removal is drawing near, too.

Planners say they hope to begin the relocation July 5.

Most of the work will be done close to the Illinois shoreline, but some will take place on the Iowa side, too.

It's a big undertaking. Iowa and Illinois have set aside \$5 million for the task, although an Iowa Department of Transportation official says a more precise estimate is likely to be \$3 million to

\$3.5 million.

Most of the estimates are based on a 2014 survey of the area, so officials will know more when they get in to do the work, said Mary Kay Solberg, senior environmental specialist with the Iowa DOT. But already the density of mussels was a surprise.

"This is going to be one of the largest mussel relocations in U.S. history," Solberg said.

The work to take place this summer is expected to take about 60 days. There also will be another relocation before the existing bridge is destroyed, which is

Comments sought

Public comment on the mussel relocation plan is being taken. Comments should be directed to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Resource Conservation, Incidental Take Coordinator, One Natural Resource Way, Springfield, Ill., 62702-1271. Or they can be submitted by email at dnr.itacordinator@illinois.gov.

The public comment period closes July 2, according to a notice that appeared in the Quad-City Times.

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Bettendorf board takes steps to respond to re-audit

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For the first time in public, the Bettendorf School Board on Tuesday discussed a re-audit of district policies and finances.

The re-audit by the Iowa Auditor's Office was released Thursday. It was done at the behest of the district's chief financial officer, Maxine McEnany, and others.

The board met Tuesday in a special public session at the district's Administration Center.

The board will consider several actions, mainly on financial matters from 2013 and 2014. McEnany pointed out she has brought her concerns to the board for years.

"Be very robust with your conduct and discussions," one resident, Mike Whiteman of Bettendorf, said. He spoke twice during the public session to encourage board members to take a close look at the state's conclusions.

Examples discussed included \$693 in T-shirts, purchased by

Bettendorf High School Principal Jimmy Casas for the high school staff. In addition, the school board noted that the re-audit showed the district paid for T-shirts for other student groups as a way to promote pride in the school.

The board will look at past actions and finesse the policy to be clearer in the future, with a first draft to be discussed in June.

Professional development and leave was discussed, and the board will seek a balance to allow em-

ployees to take the trips, with the expectation of keeping better records.

Bettendorf assistant superintendent Michael Raso said about 70 percent of professional leaves have already been approved for 2016-17.

McEnany is working on a policy that would make the central business office responsible for making travel and hotel reservations for groups of more than two people; groups of one or two people would

handle their own arrangements.

The board also aims to end use of a credit card available to a number of individuals for travel expenses. In general, individuals will use their own credit cards and then be reimbursed for expenses. Most plans will be discussed well ahead of the intended trips.

"I did not bring up these cases willy-nilly," McEnany said. For example, on the topic of

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