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Soul is a grassroots organization whose mission is to promote efficient and orderly management of power, based on the needs of Wisconsin, while protecting the natural, social and economic environments and citizens of Wisconsin.

Capitol Scandal Extends To Transmission Line Deal

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mark Williamson, who was hired by the newly formed American Transmission Company, (ATC), to move the “stalled” Arrowhead Weston project forward, is a key player in Chuck Chavla’s extortion charges.

Buried inside this mess is also the Arrowhead Weston transmission line and other items related to Wisconsin’s energy future. The criminal complaint provides a roadmap to the utility manipulation SOUL has eluded to, and been informed of, over the last three years, since taking a stand on Arrowhead-Weston.

Part of the complaint deals with legislation referred to as “Reliability 2000” which was passed by the legislature as an amendment to the State of Wisconsin budget bill on October 6, 1999 soon after payment of Mark Williamson’s dirty money. According to the criminal complaint “Reliability 2000 was of great importance to the utility industry”.

It’s easy to understand why. Before Enron fell, Reliability 2000 allowed for the formation of the American Transmission Company (ATC). “The transmission company” authorized by “Reliability 2000” is merely a sham or artifice which is perpetrated to smuggle through a public utility in the sheep’s clothing of a budget bill. The true purpose of the bill is private enterprise in the guise of a public utility. It’s purpose is to vest control over the transmission facilities of the “public utility affiliates” in a single company to be owned by themselves thereby retaining the advantages of such controls in pricing wholesale and retail electricity. “Reliability 2000” is so-called deregulation legislation under a unique scheme within Wisconsin; the first of its kind in the United States. Under no other deregulation scheme does utility deregulation vest control over the transmission facilities in a single utility-owned private company.

Madison Gas and Electric (MGE), along with Wisconsin Public Service (WPS) became founding members in the ATC, MGE employed Mark Williamson at the time of his “donations”. A Milwaukee Journal Sentinel article Oct. 24, 2002 states MGE “made two payments totaling \$125,000 to a political group set up by Sen. Chuck Chvala shortly before lawmakers took up key pieces of legislation sought by the utility, prosecutors allege in the criminal complaint against Chvala.”. One of those pieces of legislation is Reliability 2000. The criminal complaint clearly states **“Mr. Williamson knows corporate coffer contributions to political candidates are forbidden by law within the State of Wisconsin.”**

WPS, applicant for the construction of Arrowhead-Weston, and original member of the ATC also donated \$7500. They were part of the consortium composing Energize Wisconsin,

another group under scrutiny due to the scandal who financially supported Reliability 2000 legislation.

Reliability 2000 included the legalized “bribes” Mark Williamson is now dangling in front of local government officials (mostly in private non-open meetings). As part of that legislation the money was authorized as “impact fees” to county and local governments but included no “impact fees” for landowners who can simply be condemned. These legalized bribes were also made recoverable through rate increases to Wisconsin's electrical customers. Interestingly enough, these fees were never added into the cost to construct this transmission line, an oversight in part of which will send Arrowhead-Weston back to the PSC.

Most local governments do not realize this very piece of legislation will be subjected to a legal challenge with the first condemnation of a private landowner, and the golden goose will not make good on it's legalized bribe. **"SOUL is prepared to "take this issue all the way to the Supreme Court" if we have to," said SOUL president Tom Kreager.**

This should bring new meaning to “Beware of Greeks bearing gifts”, especially to local officials. One begins to question the honesty of this former MG&E lobbyist now hired as a lobbyist by the American Transmission Company to put a happy face on the disastrous Arrowhead-Weston transmission line and sell it to officials in Northern Wisconsin. Who will be next to be dragged into the Madison scandals?

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