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Island

## Norochcholai Power and irresponsible cabinet decision

The decision to cancel the power project at Norochcholai because of the objections of only the spiritual leaders of the Catholics without even naming the next best option Mawella as their choice, by the cabinet is irresponsible and unfair. This means the government has given into the diesel lobby and consumers will have to pay, even a unit rate of about Rs. 7 or Rs. 8, as they who would have to pay for a loss of about Rs. 7 billion a year for the operation of expensive diesel sets, can also the industries bear this type of additional expenditure.

However the politician would not care for they would be by common agreement among themselves raise their allowance whenever the C.O.L. affects them. Even the information leaflet sent out by the presidential secretariat on April 28, 2000 which is available on website [www.priu.gov.lk](http://www.priu.gov.lk) supports the above project under the following sub headings

- (1) Why do we need coal Fired Power plants?
- (2) How will Sri Lanka benefit from new plants?
- (3) How will the ecological impact be minimised?

However inspite of all this support by the government, the cabinet decision is most irresponsible and unfair as it drastically affects hundred thousands of consumers and the

whole country, compared with 40 odd Catholic families that will be affected if the project was not cancelled.

It should be borne in mind that the only experts available locally in power projects planning are the Engineer in the CEB and those who had left CEB recently who have had experience in power project planning that matters and as such, their reports which have taken years of painstaking work with assistance of foreign consultants should be accepted in making decisions. The government however in accepting and supporting their reports as confirmed by the above quoted information leaflet, as surprisingly cancelled the project which will cause enormous loss to the consumers and also to the country which will affect its economy to the extent that it may become a bankrupt country which is also of public interest and concern.

Cannot the consumer protection society challenge this decision as it is not only a matter of public interest and concern but causing a unbearable burden on the electricity consumers who will have to bear the additional cost of about Rs. 7 billion a year due to expensive diesel generation, because it is the consumers that pay for all expenses of the CEB by way of their monthly bills not the government.

**M. V. R. Perera**  
**Pannipitiya**