Bio-Gen deal left public the losers, — needlessly so

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The dark side of the Bio-Gen deal is exposed in Paul Bentley's June 3 column which humorously describes the sellout of the taxpayer/ratepayer.

The Bio Gen fight was recently rekindled. The Department of Environmental Protection postponed its decision on the issuance of permits. The attorney general urged the Department of Public Utility Control to reconsider its permit to Bio-Gen. Even the Connecticut Siting Council, that barely accountable public agency, planned to reconsider the Bio Gen matter. There is no doubt that these events were triggered by the citizen outcry over the secret deal between Bio-Gen and the city council.

The referendum result further strengthened the opposition. Citizens made an heroic effort to challenge the need for the facility using the proper procedure and through the appropriate channels. These events and the strength of the opposition suggested that Bio-Gen was not inevitable.

Kenetech read the writing on the wall and negotiated with Northeast Utilities. Politicians saw an opportunity to look like heroes. A quick deal was done between the two corporations and the state government, to the detriment of citizens.

The clear winner is Kenetech. All citizens, as users of electricity, will pay for the profit that Kenetech receives to not build the wood burning facility. In coup d'etat fashion the spoilers obtain a stunning monetary deal while citizens consider themselves the winners.

Citizens had no control over the process of either initiating or buying out Bio-Gen. Bio-Gen was initiated by private corporations, with the assistance of the state government, and bullied its way into the community over strong substantive objection. The buyout deal was formulated by private corporations, with the assistance of the state government, and derailed the opposition's use of proper procedure with an elaborate and expensive scheme on the backs of the people.

In light of these events it is important for citizens to focus on two issues: The process by which the state government sites these types of facilities in communities, over substantive objection; and, the inappropriate alliance between corporations and government which leads to the derailing of proper procedure.

This fight could have been won using the proper procedures. Now we all pay.

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