

**Concord**  
**Steam plant deal could be in place**  
**Utility's fate to be decided**

By: Ben Leubsdorf Monitor staff

The fate of **Concord Steam's** proposed new plant in the South End could be decided today at a pair of government meetings. The utility, which provides steam heat to downtown buildings, wants to build a more-than-\$70 million, wood-burning plant near South Main Street and Langdon Avenue that would also produce 17 megawatts of electricity. But the project has been stalled for years, in part because the utility said it couldn't secure financing until all the electricity had been sold.

Today, the state and city will decide whether to enter into 10-year contracts to buy the plant's roughly four megawatts of uncommitted power. An Executive Council meeting at 10 a.m. in Somersworth is expected to take up the contract, followed by the Concord City Council at 7 p.m. Both entities must sign on for the deal to work.

Technically, the power must be sold to a third-party company before being re-sold to the state and city, and that contract must go through competitive bidding. A single bid was received by Monday's noon deadline, said state Energy Manager Karen Rantamaki.

Two previous attempts to pull together a deal collapsed due to bidding snafus.

Details of the proposed deal, including who submitted the bid, won't be released until this morning, Rantamaki said. **Concord Steam** has said the power will cost more than market-rate electricity but will be offset by special low steam-heat rates for the city and state. Time is running out - **Concord Steam's** president, Peter Bloomfield, has said the company must break ground on the new plant by the end of the year or it will lose crucial tax credits.

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