

McNeil Station GENERATION

The [McNeil Station](#) is dispatched by ISO New England, which controls all of the region's power plants. The decision to run an individual plant is based on regional demand, reliability needs, and the bid price, which reflects fuel costs at each plant.

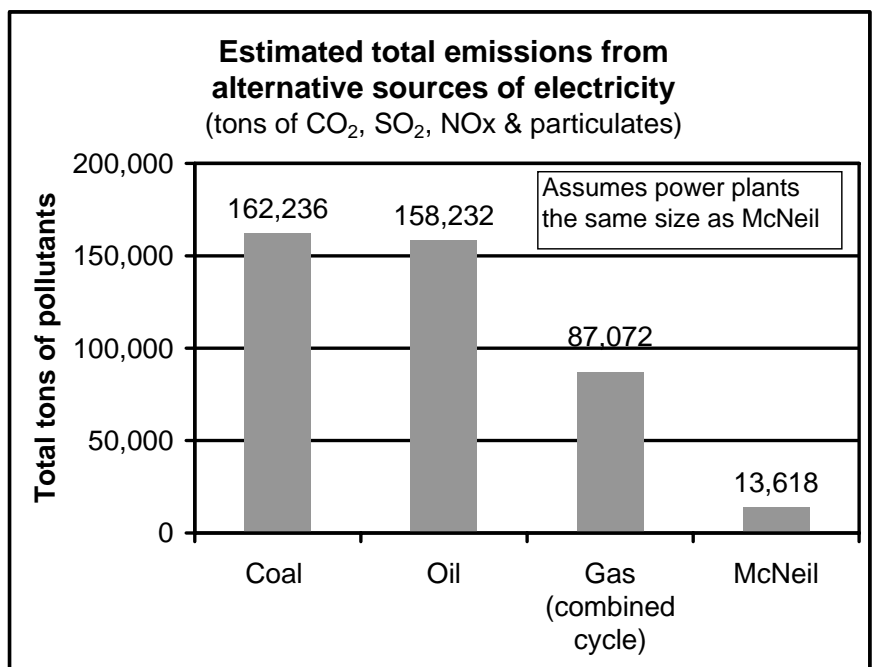
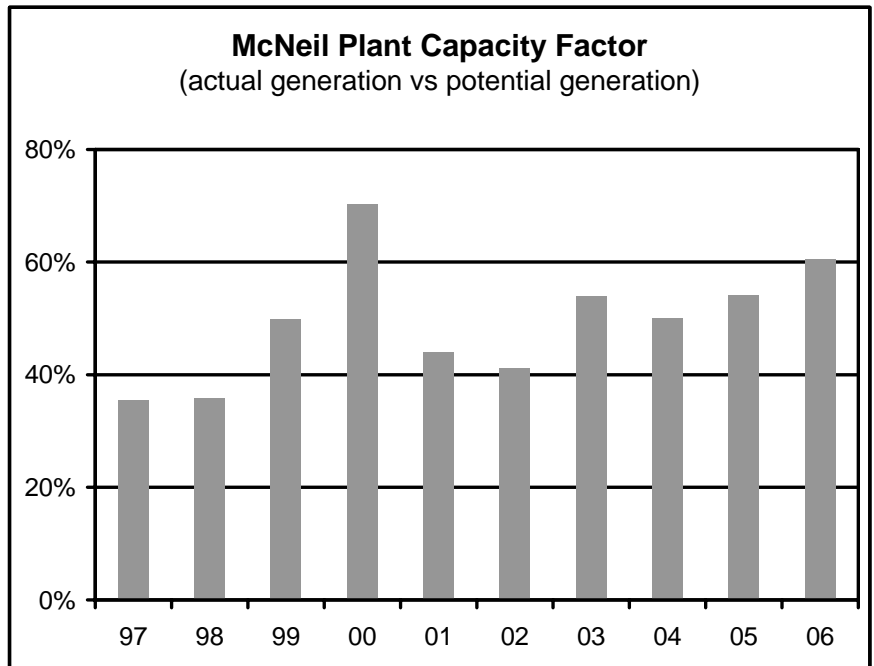
Note regarding the graph at right: McNeil was dispatched more often in 2000 for transmission reliability. Vermont needed local generation to replace power from New York when VELCO's transmission line failed.

The ISO dispatch system does not consider the total cost of producing power because it excludes "externalities" (environmental and secondary economic impacts). For example, **McNeil uses a renewable fuel**, so it doesn't deplete a limited resource. Because the wood fuel comes from the region, the money supports the local economy. And because wood contains no sulfur, McNeil's emissions are less harmful than oil or coal.

As other states develop markets for "green" energy, BED may be able to sell additional McNeil power and increase revenues. If other states adopt new rules that allow the McNeil Plant to participate, the additional revenues will help BED maintain stable rates and will benefit those involved in supplying wood to the plant (e.g., landowners, wood processors, and haulers - see page 10 for more on Economic Impacts).

All power plants that burn fuel emit certain substances into the air. Until we switch completely to pollution-free technologies like wind, solar, and hydro, we must continue to reduce demand whenever possible. For now, burning wood produces significantly less pollution than other fuels (see graph below), and emissions from McNeil are well below all state and federal standards.

McNeil's wood harvesting standards are comprehensive, field-proven means to harvest biomass fuel sustainably, and have been used as a model in developing forest certification programs. McNeil uses professional foresters to plan and monitor harvests, and these harvest plans are then reviewed by State wildlife biologists. We follow U.S. Forest Service silviculture guidelines, as well as all necessary procedures to stabilize soils and protect surface waters during harvesting. Finally, McNeil manages its wood fuel inventory to minimize the disruption of deliveries and to avoid the environmental impacts of harvesting during sensitive times of the year such as spring mud season.



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