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**Environmental Scoping Public Meeting, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
October 19, 2006 -- Augusta Technical College, Waynesboro Campus
Public Comments from Southern Alliance for Clean Energy**

Good evening. My name is Sara Barczak. I am the Safe Energy Director with Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, a non-profit energy policy organization with members throughout Georgia who are concerned about energy and the environment. I am a resident of the downstream community of Savannah. The issue of building more nuclear reactors at Plant Vogtle will affect not just this local community, but Georgia as a whole and our region overall. I hope the NRC staff understands that we need to do what will benefit all ~~of us~~^{of us}.

The NRC needs to fully research other energy choices, including energy efficiency and conservation. Renewable energy supplies are available here in Georgia, such as biopower, solar, and wind. These energy supplies should be supported due in part, because they keep dollars here at home. The NRC should be aware that new, certified wind maps of Georgia will be released by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory later this month. Additionally, the potential to use Georgia's plentiful agriculture and forestry resources must be evaluated. A conservative estimate from a University of Georgia study showed that as much as 12% of Georgia's total electricity demand could be generated from biomass. The benefits to Georgia include increased self-sufficiency, improved water resource quality, and long-term environmental and rural development benefits.

Energy efficiency and conservation represent the quickest, safest, cheapest way to provide more power and to best protect our air and water resources. The NRC needs to know that in 2001, the Energy Information Administration ranked Georgia 8th in the nation for per capita energy consumption for electricity and 40th in per capita spending on energy efficiency programs. Additionally, we are an energy exporting state. We use our natural resources, impact our citizens' health, and pile up nuclear waste within our border to power other states' air conditioning units. The NRC needs to evaluate both Georgia's actual need for power and how conservation and efficiency could reduce this supposed need.

Power plants have a tremendous impact on our water resources. Our future energy choices make a big difference on the future of the river basins and the communities and businesses reliant on those water sources. And given that the early site permit is valid for 20 years with a possible 20 year extension, we believe the NRC needs to evaluate not only the Georgia of today, but the Georgia we may be living in 20 to 40 years from now.

SONSI Review Complete

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Most people are not aware that the nuclear plants in Georgia have larger water permits than most municipalities, including nearby Augusta. Plant Vogtle has an average withdrawal of 64 million gallons per day from the Savannah River and an average water consumption of 43 million gallons per day. That shows that Vogtle is returning only about one-third of what it withdraws from the Savannah River. The plant is actually permitted for a daily maximum withdrawal of 127 mgd, which is nearly double that of both of the City of Augusta/Richmond County's permits to pull from the Savannah River and Augusta Canal (daily maximum is 71 million gallon per day with a monthly average withdrawal of 60 mgd). Yet, we're here today talking about a significant expansion of that site which will have an incredible impact on the Savannah River.

A large amount of water that is lost is evaporative loss from the cooling towers. The NRC needs to evaluate the increased water vapor that is projected with the addition of two new reactors—not only in terms of water lost from the supply source, but also in terms of global warming. Water vapor has been identified as contributor to global warming. Additionally, the NRC needs to evaluate predicted effects of global warming on this region and how nuclear power plants may be negatively impacted or unable to generate electricity. This was demonstrated by the heat wave this past summer in Europe—when nuclear power plants from Sweden to France had to shut down because the lake or river water temperatures were too high to allow for safe operation of their nuclear power plants.

Further, if we're looking to support a nuclear power infrastructure, we need to make sure we're able to support the needs to oversee it properly for the public—right now, the NRC must be aware that we've got a shortfall in terms of funding and capacity in Georgia to properly monitor the nuclear facilities we already have, let alone more that could be brought on line in the future.

As a downstream resident, I'm very concerned about tritium, a radioactive form of hydrogen that can impact our health, especially that of a developing fetus. Faced with saltwater intrusion of the Floridan Aquifer, both Beaufort and Jasper counties in SC and the Savannah area will become more dependent on the Savannah River for drinking water. Plant Vogtle already contributes to the tritium in the river and building more reactors will increase this. The NRC needs to study tritium in the river, future projections especially given SRS's already large contribution to the tritium pollution, and to analyze this with droughts and future population growth in mind.

Lastly, I was made aware of an 800-page report done in 1980, NUREG/CR-1345, by a panel of industry experts to make future reactor designs more secure. A number of feasible, low-cost design changes to make nuclear plants less vulnerable to sabotage and acts of terror were offered and apparently not one, none, of these low-cost changes appears in the so-called advanced reactor designs. Will the NRC please refer to this report and make sure that the new reactors proposed for Vogtle take these low-cost changes into account? The future safety of not only this community, but many, many, others, are at stake.

Thank you for your time and consideration.