



House of Representatives

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September 26, 2007

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

RE: Plant Vogtle

This letter is my written show of support for Southern Company and their quest of the expansion of the nuclear power plant at Plant Vogtle.

The Southern Company has clear business drivers for pursuing new nuclear generating options. These options will greatly benefit many people within Southern Companies areas of operation in the southeastern U.S. One of the main reasons that they are pursuing nuclear generating options is because of the need for additional baseload generating capacity in our area.

I have read supporting documentation that states by the year 2030, 40 % of the population of the United States is projected to live in the Southeast. By 2030, the population of the state of Georgia is expected to increase by 4 million residents. This massive growth will be the equivalent of Atlanta's current population. Electrical demand on the Southern Company system is expected to increase 30 percent during the next 15 years. Average residential consumption on our system is up approximately 16 percent in the last 13 years.

As Chairman of the House Energy, Utilities & Telecommunications Committee, I have come across many articles and have attended local and national meetings that discuss all forms of energy/power sources available to us. Nuclear power is a safe, reliable, cost-effective source of electricity. And currently nuclear power provides 15 % of Southern Company's generation. They have been operating nuclear plants safely and reliably for more than 25 years.

Statistics show that Southern Company's three nuclear power plants have operated at high levels of reliability, with an average three-year fleet capacity factor of more than 90 %. As you already know, nuclear power has a low production cost compared with other fuel sources. Uranium, which is used as nuclear fuel, has less price volatility than other fuel sources, including coal and natural gas. With all this said, new, standardized technology requires fewer parts, reducing construction and maintenance costs.

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Southern Company wants to expand its current program and will continue to show energy independence through fuel diversity. Nuclear power provides 20 % of the nation's electricity and is a key element in a balanced fuel mix. Today there are 104 nuclear power reactors operating in 31 states. Nuclear power is the second leading source of electricity, after coal and it increases America's energy independence by decreasing our dependence on foreign oil. Nuclear power also helps to relieve energy cost uncertainty caused by volatile natural gas prices.


There are many reasons for us to show our support for Southern Company and helping them to reach their goals. Nuclear Energy has been proven that it has a low environmental impact. It doesn't emit any carbon or greenhouse gasses, accounting for 75 % of all emission-free electricity in the U.S. There is public support for the use of nuclear energy, 70 % of Americans support nuclear energy.

In Georgia alone, 94 % of Georgia Power residents support building new nuclear plants to meet the additional demand for electricity expected during the next 15 - 20 years. In fact, 91 % of the residents within 10 miles of Plant Vogtle believe nuclear power will play an important role in meeting future energy needs; 82 % say that nuclear units definitely should be built.

There are several other points to consider related to Vogtle and what Southern Company has already accomplished and intends to continue within our communities. Plant Vogtle is a good neighbor, lending support to the United Way, they actively participate in the school partnership program and supporting local charitable efforts. The plant provides about 800 high-paying jobs in the Burke County area. The plant provides a product used every day in homes, businesses, schools, hospitals, etc.

Please accept my letter of support for Southern Company and their request to expand the current nuclear program at Plant Vogtle. If you would like to discuss this further, please don't hesitate to contact me through my office. Thank you for your favorable consideration of their request.

Sincerely,



Jeff Lewis
Chairman, Energy, Utilities & Telecommunications
State Representative, District 15