



NRC Public Hearing  
Proposed Nuclear Plant in Gaffney, S.C.  
June 17, 2010

My name is Valerie LeVander and I am here to represent The Global Warming Task Force of Henderson County of which I am a member.

It is odorless, tasteless and invisible. Carbon dioxide cannot be seen or smelled or tasted and that is why it is destroying this planet. If we could see the current concentration of those molecules in the air around us--molecules that will remain in our atmosphere between 50 and 500 years--we would take this crisis more seriously. While CO2 is invisible, its effects aren't.

In 1850 there were 150 glaciers in Glacier National Park. Now there are 25. There are more than three million acres of dead trees in Wyoming and Colorado and 33 million acres of dead trees in British Columbia due to beetles that thrive in the new warmer winters. One hundred eleven hurricanes formed in the tropical Atlantic between 1995 and 2008, a rise of 75 percent over the previous thirteen years. Catastrophic fires, downpours and droughts are now frequent and global.

Given just these few facts, you might wonder why The Global Warming Task Force opposes this nuclear plant since nuclear plants release little CO2 in the production of energy? Included among our reasons is this major factor--cost. While others here will speak to important environmental factors such as water, transport, safety, toxicity and storage, we wish to address cost. Why? Because moving to renewable clean energy is going to cost a lot of money. We are going to have to make choices in how we spend our public purse. As many economists, scientists and industry leaders have noted, there will not be enough money to both build expensive nuclear plants and fund research and implementation of non polluting energy sources.

Nuclear plants are fountains of red ink. "A new series of recent studies have found that the capital costs of new conventional atomic reactors have gotten so high that even before you factor in fuel and operations, you're talking seventeen to twenty-two cents per kilowatt hour--which is two or three times what Americans currently pay for electricity. (Joe Romm, "Exclusive Analysis, Part 1: The Staggering Cost of New Nuclear Power," ClimateProgress.org, January 5, 2009)

(Global Warming Task Force cont'd.)

And that's if the plant gets built on time. 'Delays would run the costs higher, as one study put it, and nuclear plants are always delayed.' (Craig A. Severance, "Business Risks and Costs of New Nuclear Power," ClimateProgress.org, January 2, 2009). A 2008 report from Moody's Investors Services concluded that any utility that decided to build a reactor could harm its credit ratings for many years. A Florida utility, in fact, predicted that even a six month delay in its building plans could add \$500 million in interest costs. And this was all before the great credit crunch at the end of the Bush administration. Bottom line: building enough conventional nuclear reactors to eliminate a tenth of the threat of global warming would cost about \$8 trillion, not to mention running electricity prices through the roof. You'd need to open a new reactor every two weeks for the next forty years and, as the analyst Joe Romm points out, you'd have to open ten new Yucca Mountains to store the dangerous waste. Meanwhile uranium prices have gone up by a factor of six this decade, because we're running out of the easy-to-find stuff and miners are having to dig deeper." (Bill McKibben, *Eaarth*, 2010)

The proposed Gaffney nuclear plant as well as other proposed nuclear plants will rob us of much needed capital to fund our shift to clean renewable energy. We have no more time to waste.

350 parts per million is considered the safe upper limit of CO<sub>2</sub> in our atmosphere. We are now at 392. Getting back to 350 means transforming our world. It means building solar arrays instead of coal plants, it means conservation is no longer the last resort, it means planting trees instead of clear-cutting rainforests, it means increasing efficiency and decreasing our waste. Getting to 350 means developing a thousand different solutions—and most of them will demand money. (350.org)

So, do we spend billions on this nuclear plant or do we spend billions on saving this planet. That's our choice and time has run out.