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General Comment

RESOLUTION OF THE PISGAH GROUP OF THE NC CHAPTER OF SIERRA CLUB
CONCERNING THE PROPOSED NEW NUCLEAR PLANTS NEAR GAFFNEY, SC.

The Pisgah Group of the Sierra Club consists of some 650 members living in Transylvania and Henderson Counties in western North Carolina, situated 50-some miles west northwest of the proposed reactor site. Most of our members are customers of Duke Power, and therefore have a financial as well as an environmental stake in the proposed reactors.

Whereas: Duke Energy is proposing to build two AP-1000 Pressurized Water Reactors on London Creek, a tributary of the Broad River near Cherokee Falls, S.C.; and

Whereas: This location is within 50 miles of some 2.3 million people, including thousands of members of Sierra Club, both in North and South Carolina, who could be impacted by any serious nuclear incident at this facility; and

Whereas: It is not totally clear that routine operation of nuclear plants is truly free of health impacts from legal releases of radioactive gases and liquids, as evidenced by the offering of potassium iodide pills to residents of North Carolina living within 10 miles of the Shearon Harris nuclear plant (as reported by the Raleigh News and Observer); and

Whereas: There is still no resolution of the issue of safe disposal of long-lived hazardous nuclear waste from reactors in our nation, meaning that radioactive wastes will be stored on site as at other nuclear plants, adding to the hazards of the reactors themselves; and
(An NRC study in 1997 calculated a fire in a spent fuel pool could produce 54,000 to 143,000 cancer deaths and

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would render 2,000 to 70,000 square kilometers of Agricultural Land uninhabitable". (Caldicott, Nuclear Power is not the Answer, p.99-105))

Whereas: The transportation of radioactive materials, fuels and waste, to and from the site is itself a hazardous activity subjecting the surrounding population along the transportation routes to health hazards from any accidents and radiation releases; and

Whereas: Uranium itself is a finite resource like coal and oil, so nuclear power is not a sustainable energy source for the long term, like solar and wind-based energy sources; and

Whereas: While nuclear plants in operation do not themselves release carbon dioxide or other "Greenhouse gases" contributing to the scientific expectations of global warming, they are not carbon neutral, as the mining and purification of uranium-derived fuels does produce these gases; and

Whereas: This nuclear plant will require the construction of a lake to ensure a reliable source of cooling water, consuming up to 55 cubic feet of water per second from the Broad River. With global warming/climate change there can be no assurance that the flow of the Broad River will remain at its current levels or that its water will be essential for drinking or agriculture in the future; and

Whereas: The cost of nuclear power is high relative to other sustainable technologies when the safety, environmental and legal liability costs are factored in, (as demonstrated by the failure of private investors to fund such plants without government subsidies and liability caps.

THEREFORE: The Pisgah Group of the Sierra Club wishes to go on record as opposed to construction of the Gaffney/Cherokee Falls nuclear plant, essentially the "No Action" alternative of any Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed cooling ponds.