

GEORGIANS FOR SMART ENERGY COALITION

FAMILY & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CITIZENS' HEARING

ON

PLANT WASHINGTON

October 6, 2009

6:30 p.m.

Joshua's Cup Coffee, LLC

Macon, Georgia

By: Ashley Bishoff

GEORGIANS FOR SMART ENERGY COALITION
Macon, Georgia

1 MS. GRAY: Welcome everybody. My name is
2 Jennette Gray. I work with a group called Environment
3 Georgia. We are a statewide, not-profit, citizen-funded,
4 environmental organization that works to protect air,
5 water, and green space.

6 There's sign-in sheet right here that I'll
7 alert y'all to. If you haven't had a chance to sign in,
8 please, do so. You might need to add another page to it.
9 That's -- it's okay. But the purpose of this evening --
10 oh. And then also there are some fact sheets on the end
11 that table right there that I encourage everyone to
12 grab. There's three of them, so grab -- grab all three.
13 But the purpose of tonight is to make sure that our
14 questions and our voices are heard.

15 So we have some deep concerns about Plant
16 Washington. We have concerns -- well, it's -- it's laid
17 out for you very nicely in these fact sheets, but we
18 have concerns about the pollution that's going to be
19 coming from this power plant, 122 pounds of mercury that
20 will end up in our rivers and in our fish is no small
21 matter. We have serious concerns about the water that
22 this plant will use. 16 million gallons of water that
23 will be guzzled up by this power plant, and, in a state
24 that has serious problems in both directions with our
25 water, we think that's a serious, serious issue that

1 people should be looking at and be thinking about
2 alternatives. And, then the cost of this plant --

3 So the plant right now is supposed to cost 2
4 billion dollars to build. What we found is that plants
5 around the country, similar plants, are costing twice
6 that much to three times that much. And then the other
7 thing you don't know is what will happen if we start
8 putting a price on carbon dioxide, which is something
9 that seems like a very likely --

10 MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC: Hopefully.

11 MS. GRAY: -- seems like a likely option. So
12 those are just a couple of the things that I'm concerned
13 about, but we're here again to make sure that we give
14 folks in the community a chance to talk and voice their
15 concerns. This plant is Plant Washington, but,
16 obviously, that pollution will make its way to mercury.
17 And, obviously, our water and ecosystems are connected
18 around the state. So there are concerns that will be
19 felt beyond Washington County.

20 So I'm glad that everyone is here. We have a
21 court reporter here with us tonight. This is Ashley. And
22 Ashley is going to be doing all the hard work tonight.
23 So her job tonight is to make sure that she gets
24 everyone's name and then where you're from and then your
25 concerns or your questions down on paper. And what we'll

1 then do is submit that to the Environmental Protection
2 Division and give them to chance to actually respond to
3 some of those concerns. We're happy to give you an
4 opportunity to come down the road and make sure your
5 voices are heard.

6 So I'm going to kick it off. This is a
7 -- you might be able to tell that is a laid back affair
8 at a coffee shop. This is our -- this is our hot seat.
9 You're welcome to stand. You welcome to sit. And, again
10 just remember, say your name first name, fallowed by
11 where you're from, any affiliation you want to share,
12 and then your questions and concerns. So we have a
13 volunteer to go first. So if you'll introduce yourself
14 and go from there. Then I -- I have a list actually in
15 my head, that I'll start putting down on paper. So, if
16 anyone wants to speak, why don't you just check in with
17 me over here, and I'll write your name down.

18 MS. MARTIN: I'm Susan Hansberry Martin, and
19 I am from Macon. I'm -- I'm a teacher, so, I guess it's
20 good that I get volunteered to go first, right?

21 I'm very concerned about cumulative effects
22 on the air quality. Right now in Macon, Plant Scherer
23 has made our air dirty and dangerous. We have -- we're
24 over the limit for soot, and this plant will put out a
25 whole lot of soot, most of it very small in diameter.

1 It's obvious that the smaller particles are
2 extraordinarily dangerous, not -- not only in and of
3 themselves, but also because they can also carry mercury
4 along with them.

5 I'm also concerned that this plant will put
6 out more NoC and SoCs. These are two sulfur and --
7 nitrogen-and-sulfur-containing compounds that contribute
8 to ozone. They will also put out a lot of the of OCS.
9 These are volatile, organic compounds that go into the
10 air. Some of them, we don't even know what they are.
11 They are the byproduct of combustion, and they are not
12 good for you as well.

13 Climate change is not debated in scientific
14 circles. I am a scientist, and we don't need to
15 contribute any more to the carbon dioxide load of our
16 state and/or our nation. I'm extremely concerned about
17 the lead that will be coming out of this plant. Right
18 now there have been some studies done by public health
19 officials here in Macon. They did a small sample of the
20 school children here in Bibb County and found that 30
21 percent of them were toxic for lead. Lead leads to
22 retardation. We don't know where this lead is coming
23 from.

24 Now, that study has not been completed, but
25 we do know that it's dangerous. It's here, and we

1 certainly cannot rule out any effects in the air -- that
2 will put out lead into our air, into our atmosphere --
3 I'm very concerned about Mercury. Mercury is persistent
4 in the environment. Right now we have a load of mercury
5 in this town. We don't need anymore.

6 We have fish advisories in our lakes and in
7 the streams. Most of the people who use these lakes and
8 stream to fish from have no idea that the fish that
9 they're eating are toxic, and that they can be harmed,
10 and pregnant women -- and their babies will suffer
11 irreparable neurological damage. We don't need more.

12 The aquifer under Plant Washington is
13 already threatened. We don't need to threaten it
14 further, as well, as having ash ponds that will be
15 extraordinarily dangerous, particularly, when you look
16 at what happened in Tennessee recently.

17 The pollution from Plant Scherer has
18 already hurt Macon. I don't want to see another
19 community suffer the same kind of damage. It has damaged
20 us economically. We already have plants that will not
21 locate here, because we have so much air pollution. If
22 you put a plant in Plant Washington, what's that going
23 to do to any future economic development that might
24 happen down there?

25 In Georgia, our demand for power is

1 decreasing. Why are we going to put our people at risk
2 to put -- to make power that's going to be sold out of
3 state? Is it right that we put our own people's safety
4 and health at risk so we can sell power, cheap power to
5 Florida, Tennessee, anywhere else? That's not right.
6 Efficiency is much, much cheaper than building new power
7 plants. And Georgia Power knows this, and the other
8 power plants know this as well.

9 It would be far more economically efficient
10 for a plant to build efficiency plants, to come in and
11 build windows, build other kinds of energy-saving
12 devices. This can bring them four to five to five to six
13 times as many jobs that are clean, and they will be
14 sustainable into the future. This is not a sustainable
15 technology.

16 Those kinds of plants can and should be
17 located in rural areas. That's the sort of economic
18 development needed. We need to move past the time when
19 rural Georgia sells itself to dirty plants. The health
20 and safety of our people is worth far more than that,
21 and there are alternatives. Thank you.

22 MR. HERRING: My name is Neil Herring, and I
23 live in Jesup, Georgia. I am member of Altamaha
24 Riverkeeper. This is a little bit of a homecoming to me.
25 I left in '88, and the mother of my children had a

1 residency over here at Macon Hospital, just right over
2 there. Thirty-five years ago in '75, '74, '75, along in
3 there the dates, I used to come to Macon repeatedly to
4 work with -- with a group people from Macon and another
5 group of people from Monroe County who were opposed to
6 the construction of Plant Scherer, opposed to Scherer's
7 construction. And we were not successful in that effort,
8 as you may know, but we did learn a number of the
9 things. We did get the public health commissioner to
10 come down here and have a hearing at the Macon
11 Courthouse. It was packed with people. In fact, they
12 were spilling out into the stairwells. So the Georgia
13 Power Company and the coop and the partners in the plant
14 all swore up and down, oh, this is for Georgia. And,
15 now, for 30 years, the plant has been running, and half
16 of the load goes off system to the state of Florida. And
17 so we clean Florida's air with Georgia lungs and Georgia
18 wildlife and Georgia plant life. And that's a -- that's
19 a -- this is another installation in that same process.

20 They have capacity at Scherer to meet any load they
21 would be meeting by constructing Plant Washington, by
22 simply dedicating it to the Georgia load, if, in deed,
23 there is a load there for them to meet. In fact, what
24 they're probably doing is they're going to load Plant
25 Washington on to the members on the -- of the coops and

1 continue to use the coops' share of the four commonly
2 owned plants, Scherer, Wansley, Hatch and Vogtle to
3 remain active in the off-system sales market, which is
4 highly profitable and unregulated. And so, obviously,
5 Plant Washington is more an economic plow for the
6 decision makers in the utilities, rather than an economic
7 tool for the development of the state that has served
8 any real needs of Georgians. And, in fact, it creates
9 needs in Georgia health care, quite expensive as we go
10 along.

11 The South, according to a study -- Georgia
12 Tech did what they call a meta study, which means they
13 looked at 60 or 70 states of the southern region for
14 energy conservation, and they averaged them all over a
15 period of 10 years or so. They discovered that the South
16 spends one-fifth of the national average on energy
17 conservation.

18 The South is the richest area in the country
19 for energy conservation. We are incredibly wasteful, and
20 the potential for energy conservation is just enormous.
21 And to -- to invest money in creating new capacity,
22 when we've already got capacity in place -- and we got
23 the potential for a lot more, much cheaper capacity in
24 efficiency in conservation, it's just real poorly --
25 that's poor planning.

1 What Susan said about the jobs is kind of
2 interesting to me. Living in Jesup, I'm one county away
3 from Plant Hatch. This is a proposal to build a biomass
4 plant in Appling County, and where Plant Hatch, the
5 nuclear plant is. And one of the the reasons justifying
6 Appling County for a location for that facility -- and
7 it may very well be a good reason -- but it's because
8 the county is so poor. They host the nuclear plant, but
9 they're poor. Hosting these big nature-exploiting
10 enterprises doesn't help your economy.

11 And, if you don't believe me, go to West
12 Virginia, the biggest coal-producing state still. They
13 produce more more than Wyoming, and, to this day, you
14 can't find a roadside cafe in the damn state. It is so
15 desperately poor everybody eats pinto beans at home and
16 cornbread. It's so poor there, because every place that
17 is rich in resources and rich in the exploitation of
18 resources is poor in income. And it's just a a wild,
19 American development. It's an industrial society that's
20 unfortunate, but there it is.

21 We could in employ a lot of people in this
22 state by doing conservation. The houses in the housing
23 stock in Georgia, it's pretty evident. It leaks air. It
24 leaks heat. It leaks air from space coolers, and the
25 savings that are available are enormous. The training is

1 not that rigorous. Kids can be taught how to do it and
2 can be employed probably the rest of their lives:
3 Calking, refitting doors and windows, basic building
4 trade skills that will be used for the rest of their
5 lives.

6 Now, I drove by Plant Hatch on the way up
7 here today, just so I could admire the former sites of
8 the construction-workers'-trailer parks. These are
9 desolate lots along, you know, US 1 with telephone
10 poles and wires and weeds. That's where the building,
11 the workforce that built Hatch lived when they built
12 Hatch. And where are they now? They're building plants
13 elsewhere. They're gone. They're gypsies. They're not
14 Georgians. They're -- they're citizens of the
15 construction site. And that's what you'll get in
16 Washington County. If they build this thing, you'll have
17 trailer parks, and then you won't. They'll be gone.
18 They'll go elsewhere. They'll follow the work as they
19 always do.

20 Why don't we get permanent jobs for
21 Georgians, just to keep our people, our kids employed in
22 our state by doing things that serve our state, instead
23 of doing things that damage our state? And, these
24 rivers, the Ocmulgee, right out here, the Oconee, which
25 is going to be the heat sink for Plant Washington. And

1 that's what we're talking about at these plants. You
2 have to understand they talk about pollution control.
3 Blah. Blah.

4 These turbines, if they run with the uranium
5 or the coal or wood, have to be cooled. The turbines
6 have to exhaust into a vacuum. If they exhaust against
7 the 14 pounds of atmospheric pressure, their efficiency
8 falls off the table.

9 Water expands 600 times when you boil it,
10 and, when you the condense it, it shrinks 600 times, and
11 it creates a vacuum that sucks the steam through the
12 turbines, out the exhaust of the turbine. That's what
13 the cooling water is for. They've got to have these
14 immense heat sinks. That's why you've got Scherer up here
15 pumping water down the Ocmulgee into Lake Juliette.

16 They got the same thing at the Branch Plant,
17 north of Milledgeville, where a lawsuit finally forced
18 them to put a cooling tower out there, instead of using
19 -- they turned a cove where the power plant is into a
20 fish cooker. They were cooking the fish with the -- the
21 cooling water, dumping out of the plant. And we made
22 them put a cooling tower there, so that now the fish can
23 live in the water. They're going to have to do the same
24 thing, and they're going to use ground water, a
25 combination -- or some combination of ground water and

1 Oconee River water as a heat sink for this Washington
2 proposal. And it just unnecessary.

3 We're using -- the reason Plant Hatch is
4 located on the Altamaha is there is a heat sink for
5 those reactors, and those rivers are working pretty damn
6 hard. In addition, the Ocmulgee is carrying -- every day
7 God sends 90 million gallons of waste water from metro
8 Atlanta right past your -- down town here -- every day.

9 Now, that's one of the reasons Florida and
10 Alabama are suing Georgia, because that water came out
11 of the Chattahoochee River. It went through the toilets
12 in Atlanta, treatment plants, and then into the
13 Ocmulgee. These are hard working rivers. They don't need
14 any more abuse like Plant Washington proposes to
15 implement on them. So those are some of the basic points
16 on the thing, but I know that a candidate for governor
17 is here tonight. And he has, I think, courageously come
18 out in opposition of Plant Washington and is in favor of
19 alternative wood-fired power as a job-creating
20 alternative for Georgia.

21 We don't have any coal mining in Georgia.
22 Coal for any plant in Georgia has to come from some
23 place else, on trains. And I think that all of us
24 should ask every single person -- I think there's nine
25 or a dozen. I don't know how many of you there are --

1 people who are running for governor in this state, if
2 they would be willing to oppose the construction of any
3 more coal plants in this state. This is a statewide
4 issue. It's a simple issue. It's either yes or no. I
5 opposed it. Or, yes, I'm in favor of it. I think that
6 it's particularly incumbent on the four particular
7 candidates to take positions on this issue.

8 Thurbert Baker, the Attorney General, is the
9 boss of the attorneys who defend the permits for these
10 plants. They have engaged in very vigorous, aggressive
11 defenses of the permits to ruin our state's resources.
12 And so Thurbert Baker needs to be asked, what do you
13 intend to do when you're governor? Are you going to
14 continue this policy of wrecking resources for our
15 people?

16 Another candidate that needs to be
17 questioned on this issue is Roy Eugene Barnes of Cobb
18 County, who is the criminal attorney for Dwight Brown of
19 Cobb Energy, the man who is the most important person
20 behind Plant Washington. Roy Barnes is his lawyer. He's
21 in a little bit of a criminal problem in Cobb County,
22 and his lawyer is the for candidate for governor, Roy
23 Barnes. Roy Barnes needs to tell us: How do you feel
24 about Dwight's project in Plant Washington? Are you for
25 it? Or are you against it?

1 Eric Johnson is a candidate for governor.
2 He's from Savannah. His campaign is financed by people
3 -- people from Washington County, who are deeply
4 interested in the construction of this power plant. How
5 does Eric Johnson feel about this power plant? Is he for
6 it or against it? Just people want to know.

7 Nathan Deal is the candidate for governor.
8 He lives in Gainesville, Georgia. He lives in Washington
9 D.C. now, but he used to live in Gainesville, Georgia.
10 He grew up in Washington County. He's a native of
11 Washington County. How does he feel about his boyhood
12 home? Does he feel like his boyhood home needs to be
13 sacrificed on the alter of off-systems sales, and
14 poisoning the people of the state that he wants to be
15 governor of? He needs to be asked.

16 And I urge all of y'all to pose those
17 questions to those men, for all of these candidates. How
18 do you feel about shipping jobs and shipping health out
19 of our state while a handful, a small group of people,
20 makes profit off of this enterprise? Is that what we
21 want for the future of our state? Haven't we had enough
22 of that?

23 We burn more coal here than any other place
24 in the world. We've got the largest coal-fired plant in
25 North America. It's Scherer, the largest in North

1 America. There's 35 trains, full length, hundred car,
2 hundred-ton-per-car, train in motion all the time,
3 around the clock, all the time moving coal from the coal
4 fields of Appalachia and Wyoming to Scherer, and taking
5 the empty cars back to get more.

6 Do we need more of that here? No. No. No.
7 We do enough. We do enough. We need to pursue other
8 avenues to produce new sources of power, and the most
9 important of the new sources is conservation and
10 efficiency. Thank you very much for your time.

11 DUBOSE PORTER: Well, I'm DuBose Porter. I'm
12 the state representative down in Dublin, Laurens County.
13 And I am a candidate for governor, Neil. And I'm for a
14 power plant in Washington County. I am against a
15 coal-fired power plant in Washington County. If we're
16 talking about jobs for Georgians, then it ought to be a
17 wood-fired plant, because it has all of the -- the
18 things that generate the jobs and the plant, but the
19 ripple effect in the forestry industry, for skidder
20 operators, for landowners with a renewable source of
21 clean energy that we grow right here in middle Georgia.

22 We export pellets to Europe for clean energy there,
23 but we import coal for dirty energy here. And what I
24 think a lot of people don't realize is the impact of the
25 coal-fired plants have on our rivers and streams here.

1 As you know, I've been the legislator for 27 years. And
2 I produced the River Corridor Protection Act back
3 Eighties and passed it in the early Nineties. And I
4 never thought that in the place where I grew up that
5 there would be places where it was not safe to eat the
6 fish that you catch out of our rivers and streams.

7 The Ogeechee River, one of the prettiest
8 black-watered rivers in this state, has so much mercury
9 in it now that if someone is pregnant, it is not safe to
10 eat the fish caught of the Ogeechee River. If you are
11 not pregnant you should only eat one a month. That's
12 here in Georgia now. So what should we do if we've got
13 to meet energy demands?

14 And let's have something that the Georgia
15 Tech studies have shown, that the Warnell School of
16 Forestry has shown, that we have one of greatest
17 renewable sources of clean energy right here in middle
18 Georgia, and that, if we're going to do a plant, which
19 it is questionable whether it would ever get permitted
20 for coal anyway -- and it shouldn't because of the
21 effects it has on our rivers and streams, but we have
22 the capacity for renewable resource that basically does
23 not have a market, that we grow and have the biggest
24 supply of right here in middle Georgia.

25 Right now with Georgia Power converting the

1 Mitchell Power Plant in Albany from coal fired to wood
2 fired. Some of the MCs are joining, and they've spotted
3 a place in in Laurens County to put a it wood-fired
4 plant. Have this place instead of those who want to
5 bring it in by railroad and make the money off bringing
6 the coal in, not promote it so heavily. Then we should
7 have the opportunity to put a wood-fired, clean energy,
8 renewable-energy plant right here in middle Georgia.

9 One that would put -- if they talk about putting
10 people to work in the employment here, a wood-fired
11 plant would do more in a ripple effect for jobs in
12 middle Georgia than anything you could do with a power
13 plant. What it would do is you would look at the amount
14 of timberland we have. We have 27 million acres of
15 privately owned timberland in Georgia, with basically --
16 without a market for pulpwood now. And they talk about,
17 oh, you can't have a reliable source. Y'all we grow
18 this. You see it standing. You have to pay someone to
19 take and thin your timber down. And, when you look at a
20 source like this, that would be a sustainable resource
21 that we can grow here, at the quantity we can grow right
22 here in middle Georgia, the ripple effect of the jobs
23 would be tremendous for economic development.

24 Right now, you're talking about one single
25 construction project that would be mainly by people

1 brought in out of state and, once it's built, a very
2 limited number of jobs. If it was done with clean
3 energy, without the effects that the coal has, you
4 wouldn't have the mercury problem. You wouldn't have the
5 impact on the pollution of the water. You wouldn't have
6 the impact on the fish. And we could start seeing a
7 trend of hopefully going more -- and reducing the impact
8 that has damaged our rivers and streams and damaged our
9 wildlife, and, more importantly, damaged the health of
10 our people.

11 And people almost don't want to believe you
12 when you tell them, but they need to know it is true. It
13 is not safe to eat the fish in many of Georgia's rivers.
14 I have kept a map in my office in Atlanta of impaired
15 and unimpaired streams in Georgia. And it's shocking to
16 look at it and see that there should be a plan to turn
17 those impaired streams and waterways into unimpaired
18 streams. The kind that -- that we have this great
19 resource of water here in Georgia.

20 When I first put in for River Corridor
21 Protection, I went to Gene Odom, who was the college
22 professor at the University of Georgia, and he provided
23 me what he had done in the Sixties with a Kellogg study
24 that showed the great thing about Georgia water
25 resources, and he told me that Georgia's water is more

1 valuable than Louisiana oil, because it's a renewable
2 resource if we take care of it. And we have a decision
3 here with this plant whether to continue to pollute and
4 greater pollute our waterways and ruin the future of the
5 use of that water and the health of our people. Or we
6 have the opportunity to make another choice of using
7 something we grow right here, that also happens to be a
8 clean energy source. And the ripple effects of the jobs
9 that they talk about, Jobs for Georgians, and they put
10 out this massive campaign about me saying that I don't
11 want jobs for Georgians. And I want to say, they're
12 wrong.

13 They're limiting jobs for Georgians, and
14 they're limiting our future by putting in a coal-fired
15 plant in Washington County, but, if they would put a
16 wood-fired plant, not only would you have the limited
17 jobs for construction, but the ripple effect in the
18 forest industry for clean energy in this state would be
19 tremendous, the ripple effect of the lawyers, the ripple
20 effect of skidder operators, the ripple effect of
21 landowners to finally have something that could generate
22 from the land, so they can pay property taxes on their
23 land. So you can keep Georgia's land in forestry and in
24 this clean and renewable resource.

25 If you are really for jobs for Georgians,

1 think for a wood-fired power plant in Washington County.
2 We should absolutely, throughout this community in
3 Middle Georgia, should oppose the coal-fired plant,
4 because the impact that it would have on our waterways
5 and on the health of our people. But a wood-fired
6 plant, which is something that much of Europe has gone
7 to, because they don't want to pollute their waterways
8 and their -- their -- and hurt the health of their
9 people.

10 We're exporting this resource that we grow
11 up here there, and import coal from the other parts of
12 the state. Job creation for those coal mines are
13 somewhere else, but we have the opportunity and choice
14 to create those jobs here. Something that would be clean
15 and something that would be renewable and something that
16 would not have the harmful impact that this plant would
17 have on the health of our people here.

18 Now, you're going to hear a lot from them,
19 and it's going to be incorrect. I want to ask people to
20 please check this out, because they're going to say
21 there is not enough reliable wood to do this. There is.
22 You talk to any forester. You talk to the school of
23 forestry. You talk to those who did the study at Georgia
24 Tech. And they talk about, well, we have to have a
25 20-year-commitment of coal. And we can get that from

1 coal. We can't get that from timber.

2 There are those who say they would back up
3 log trucks here to Alabama, because there's that much
4 resource here. But the main thing is we have a choice of
5 rather to have clean energy or dirty energy. We have a
6 choice of whether to create a very limited number of
7 jobs that hurt the health and welfare of our land and
8 our people or one that would create jobs, that would
9 have the ripple effect throughout the Middle Georgia in
10 clean energy with a wood-fired plant.

11 You wouldn't have the use the energy to do
12 the pellets. You could do the shredding and the chipping
13 right here directly into the boiler. There may be some
14 supplement of natural gases, but it also would not have
15 the side effects of the mercury in the side effects that
16 coal has. So either way that you do it to get the
17 sustainable source -- we're talking about an opportunity
18 for a clean-energy plant. And those who don't want it
19 are only these who would profit by it there. But, if we
20 want to do something that everyone could have a part of
21 the economic growth of this, then it should be wood
22 fired.

23 If you want to do something that helps
24 landowners and the health of our people, we have that
25 choice here. Which is why I think we need to unanimously

1 say no to any more coal-fired plants in Georgia, and
2 let's use this renewable, clean source of energy that we
3 grow right here and keep jobs for Georgians here. Thank
4 you.

5 MR. MARTIN: My name is Lee Martin. I am a
6 lifelong Macon Knight. After fallowing these three
7 eloquent speakers, you're going to appreciate my brief
8 comments. You'll also understand why I'm not cut out to
9 be a politician. Of course, my ponytail is your fist
10 clue. I would like to just thank everybody: Jennette,
11 Neil, everyone else who came as far as you did, even if
12 it's just up the block, to try to make a position
13 statement to EPD.

14 EPD would not come to us. They refused to
15 have statewide meetings about Plant Washington. So
16 we're going to go to the EPD by doing these meetings.
17 Some of this -- you're going to start to hear redundancy
18 here, but a lot of this that has been mentioned. You
19 can find in a wonderful book by Dr. Robert Bullard. He
20 is a professor at Clark University, and he wrote a
21 wonderful book Dumping in Dixie. The title is Dumping --
22 think about that for a minute -- in Dixie. Now, think
23 about that for a minute. It mirrors almost everything
24 that already been said here tonight. The purpose of
25 this book was to speak out and convince poor

1 communities, not just in Georgia, but throughout the
2 United States. Louisiana is a prime example.

3 LS Power was going to build a power plant in
4 Early County. Early county is the poorest county in
5 Georgia. It's close to the Chattahoochee, so, you know,
6 they've got some water. The Chattahoochee is in some
7 location right now with Georgia, Alabama, and Florida
8 about the amount of the water. That's the poor county --
9 that's where they went. Sandersville is a -- Washington
10 County is a poor county right now. So where is power
11 for Georgians going to go to build a coal-fired power
12 plant? They're going to promise a lot of jobs. That's
13 why they're there. They're also going to pull water out
14 of the Oconee and the Ogeechee.

15 I have a very dear friend, who was born in
16 Tyndall, Georgia, right next to Sandersville, has
17 retired back there, and he said, Lee, when I go to the
18 Oconee today -- when I was little boy I used to go and
19 the water was waist high. He said when I go there now
20 it's just a trickle. With the drought that Georgia has
21 had for the last three years, up until our recent rain,
22 I don't understand how Plant Washington can make the
23 case that they're going to have enough water to cool the
24 towers as Neil so eloquently explained.

25 I'm going to talk a little about Plant

1 Scherer. It's dear to my heart. I have allergies. When
2 my children were born and the late Sixties or early
3 Seventies, I had to take them all the way to Atlanta to
4 an allergist, because Macon didn't have any. And, now,
5 there are at probably at least 15. The Medical Center
6 of Central Georgia, which is a Class 1 trauma unit, they
7 have a asthma clinic. Dr. Michael Chang who led the --
8 he's with Georgia Tech. He led the Fall Line Air Quality
9 Study in Macon.

10 760,000 babies a year are born in the U.S.
11 at risk of mercury poisoning from their mother's breast
12 milk, 760,000 babies a year. Plant Scherer emits 1700
13 pounds of mercury into the atmosphere every year. That's
14 the largest amount of mercury emitted by any industry,
15 not just power plants in the state of Georgia.

16 Plant Branch in Milledgeville is the third
17 largest emitter, being at 1200 pounds of mercury every
18 year. So now we've got somebody saying let's put one on
19 the east side of over here. We'll have a of coal-fired
20 power plant emitting mercury.

21 The Albany Harold wrote a small piece about
22 two months ago, and they posted a question: Do you want
23 to catch a fish in the U.S. that doesn't have Mercury in
24 it. They said, well, guess what. You can't catch one.
25 There isn't one.

1 We have three fish advisories in Bibb
2 County. One is at Lake Tobesofkee, the other two are in
3 the Ocmulgee. The Ocmulgee is the our source of our
4 drinking water. Plant Scherer's ash ponds are north of
5 the intake plant -- for the water -- the Macon Water
6 Authority. Almost 50 percent of the power comes from
7 the third and fourth cooling -- third and fourth units.
8 It's sold out of state. If that power were used for
9 Georgians -- and Neil is right. It is used filtered
10 through our lungs -- if that power was used for
11 Georgians, we wouldn't need Plant Scherer.

12 There has not been a coal-fired power plant
13 built in Georgia in 25 years. The state of Florida will
14 not allow a coal-fired power plant to be built in their
15 state by law. You cannot build. You cannot get a permit
16 for a coal-fired power plant in the state of Florida.
17 Macon and Bibb County have been in -- I don't even
18 remember how many years. It's been a while for both
19 ground-level ozone and for M 2.5, which is a particular
20 now. The EPA, thank goodness, is getting ready to make
21 standards for ground-level ozone even more strict than
22 they are today. What that means is there cannot be any
23 industry to come into this county that is going to
24 impact the air qualities in any way, whatsoever.

25 Neil mentioned about the enormous amount of

1 coal -- there's a great book. I can't remember the
2 title, but the author is John McPhee. And he basically
3 discusses transportation across the U.S., and in it he
4 eludes to the enormous amount of coal that Plant Scherer
5 uses.

6 In Kingston, Tennessee, about six months
7 ago, five or six months ago, they had one of the top
8 five environmental disasters of all times. When the
9 coal ash pond burst and leaked into the -- I think it is
10 the Emory River. It was a huge, costly cleanup. How do
11 you really clean that up? We had a raw sewage spill of
12 over 7 million gallons a day in the Ocmulgee just two
13 weeks ago. How do you clean -- you don't -- you can't
14 clean it. It took them like five days to fix the
15 problem. All of this flows right down the river, right
16 into the Altamaha, further on down the road.

17 I just wanted to mention a couple of things
18 about Plant Scherer because it impacts the same
19 situation at Plant Washington. Plant Scherer is the
20 largest emitter of carbon dioxide in North America.
21 Carbon Dioxide is the leading cause of global warming.
22 I think that's all I had to say. I tried to be brief,
23 but I didn't want to go on too long. But anyway -- I
24 almost broke my neck. Thank you.

25 MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC: . I live in Macon,

1 and I've lived here for 12 years. And I consider it my
2 home now. I wasn't born here like Lee. I just wanted to
3 say something about the water. Plant Washington is going
4 to use up water that is really valuable. They're --
5 they're talking about taking about 16 million gallons of
6 water every day from the Oconee River and then drilling
7 groundwater wells. And the residents need this water.
8 There won't be enough water for ponds, for farm use, or
9 personal use.

10 When there's not enough water left in the
11 Oconee River, their plant will have to draw water from
12 the underground aquifer, and the water table there has
13 already dropped -- what some 40 something feet in the
14 last 40 years. It's just water usage I'm concerned
15 about. And, also, just in terms of cost, utilities and
16 regulators use coal nation wide for cost reasons. The
17 -- the cost of this project are not be accurately
18 figured. And everybody talked about the air pollution,
19 and I'm like everybody. I'm very concerned about that as
20 well. So I'll stop. Thanks.

21 MS. JENKINS: My name is Tracy Jenkins. I
22 just want to talk about something or -- I'm a biologist.
23 I'm a geneticist, and the thing that I'd like to -- at
24 at least to ask a question about is that we all are
25 aware of people have mercury poisoning. Most people are

1 aware of the Japanese study and what happens to children
2 and how they're defected and stuff.

3 One of the things that we do not talk about
4 is the residual effects, things that aren't shown or
5 things you don't see or things other generations may
6 carry on. If you have any kind of mutation in, what we
7 call the germ cell, sperm or egg, it may not show up
8 immediately. It may not even show up in the next
9 generation, but it's there. And it will be carried on,
10 and then it may show up. It -- we are carrying --
11 normally, every human being has so many mutations that
12 they get during their lifetime or that they pass on.
13 They generally are not going to be detrimental, but, if
14 we accumulate these mutations, there will -- we will
15 reach a point to where they will be very important.

16 And we're aware that happened in West
17 Virginia or that may happen in Japan, but we're not
18 aware of things that we're passing on to our children.
19 That kind of concerns me. That concerns me a great deal.

20 We're talking about bringing coal in from
21 somebody else. So it's okay for them to dig the coal to
22 destroy mountains, their -- their streams, where they
23 live? It's okay to do that? So that they can bring that
24 coal here, and then we can process that coal which is a
25 pollutant, which put carcinogens -- the most important

1 to me is the mucinogens that it puts into the air.
2 That means you're willing to pass on to your children,
3 that you knew you were willing to pass on to begin with,
4 that the risk is okay, because we can create jobs.

5 Now, how long are we going to have those
6 jobs? Is there a limit to the jobs? Are the jobs
7 by-night or infinite? We need to think about the
8 repercussions.

9 MS. GARY: That's all that I had on my list,
10 so I -- oh.

11 MR. OLIVER: I'm Rich Oliver. I'm here
12 tonight with a nonprofit organization named Jobs For
13 Georgians. Our organization supports jobs in Georgia,
14 being done by Georgia workers. Plant Washington will
15 establish somewhere around 1500 jobs just during the
16 construction period. This equals to 45,000 person loads
17 of work or 188 full-time jobs for a 20-year timeline.
18 After completion of the construction, it will create
19 over a 129 full-time jobs, and another 200 jobs will
20 spin off from that for the Central Georgia area. We will
21 generate over 1 million dollars in Washington County,
22 and we'll create jobs and an annual boost of local
23 businesses, as the plant will require annual
24 inspections, upgrades, and repairs.

25 With the unemployment rates in Georgia well

1 over 10 percent and closer to 20 percent in the
2 construction industry, I believe we need to attract jobs
3 from any source possible, as long they are supporting
4 the working people from our state. And they are within
5 the legal guidelines established by our local state and
6 federal officials. Therefore, I am here to go on record
7 in support of Plant Washington Power Plant as long as it
8 supports our working families in this great state of
9 ours, and it's built within the guidelines established
10 by this state environmental protection guidelines.

11 Thank you very much.

12 MS. GRAY: I was going to say, let's give
13 Ashley a little break, and, if you want to come and sign
14 in - we'll give her a break and take off from there.

15 (Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

16 MR. HOLIDAY: My name is Lindsay.
17 L-i-n-d-s-a-y. Holiday. H-o-l-i-d-a-y. I stand opposed
18 to any more coal plants in my state and in my country.
19 There is no clean coal. If you got some clean coal, I'd
20 like to see it.

21 As a dentist, I deal with mercury in the
22 mouth. There's -- there's a problem with mercury.
23 There's a problem with fish up there in the river. That
24 mercury came from burning coal in my country, in my
25 state, in this region, in my air, and in my water.

1 There is no such thing as clean coal. Not now. The
2 technology is not here. And it's time to just shut that
3 fantasy away.

4 People that say the sun was not a good
5 source of energy, I challenge them to stand out in the
6 sun for two days in the summer time, and you will burn
7 to a crisp. The sun not only can heat this building --
8 the sun every day heats all of Macon, all of Georgia,
9 all of the United States, the whole world. The amount
10 of energy coming from that solar furnace, that nuclear
11 reactor, 93 million miles away, is the perfect amount of
12 energy, and it's a perfect distance between me and a
13 nuclear reactor. And that is an alternative to coal.
14 Thank you very much.

15 MR. JOHNSON: I'm JJ Johnson, and I'm from
16 Brunswick, and when Neil was up here earlier -- he must
17 be outside. I met Neil Saturday. I'm with Jobs For
18 Georgians. That's what we're about, and he came to see
19 us. He talked earlier -- and I am not here to criticize
20 him. He talked earlier about building Plant Hatch and
21 Plant Vogtle. I worked with both of them. I know the
22 trailer parks he's talking about. Yeah. They work people
23 from other states, but many of those people came from
24 Brunswick, they came from Macon, they came from Atlanta.
25 They went down there and worked every week. They had to

1 have a place to stay.

2 Talking about water and polluting the water,
3 we've polluted the water in this state for many years.
4 Where I live, there is a paper mill, and there is a lot
5 of paper sitting here in front of everyone tonight.
6 That water is polluted from that paper mill. I can't eat
7 the fish out of that river. That needs to change, but
8 they're changing it. And they're doing it with the new
9 technology in the paper mills. That is not the
10 technology from the Forties. They cleaned this up. They
11 cleaned the air.

12 Coal technology is going way better than
13 what it was before. What we're trying to say here -- and
14 several people got up and kind of criticized us because
15 we're pro-jobs. We're simply saying there's a 10-percent
16 unemployment rate in the state, in the state of
17 Georgia, and we need to produce jobs. Thank you.

18 MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC: I'd like to speak a
19 little bit about the water issue, which everyone is
20 pretty much concerned about. I live four miles from
21 where the plant is to be. I drink that water. My well is
22 down in the same aquifer they would be drawing from. We
23 have in Washington County, and have had since the 1940s,
24 a growing and very active industry.

25 It has -- it in the cities have drawn all,

1 on occasion, 26 million gallons per day, per year, pump
2 every day from that aquifer. The aquifer over a 20-year
3 period has decreased 10 feet. Considering that amount of
4 withdrawal, that is not a terrible result. When pumping
5 stopped, when we had one plant close, the aquifer
6 rebounded very very nicely. So this aquifer is capable
7 of recharging. It is rechargeable. As we withdrawal
8 less, it will come up.

9 So I'd look at their plans which are to draw
10 16 millions gallons a day, when they cannot get it from
11 the river. So this is partial time during the year. It
12 could be conceivably, if we're in a terrible, terrible,
13 severe drought, it could be ten months may be. And,
14 normally, this would be a three or four-month period of
15 withdrawal at that rate by the plant. So, yes. The water
16 resources are robust, and they can stand it. I am
17 perfectly confident of that.

18 And, Mr. Porter, the problem one of the
19 problems with biomass you need to look at it in your
20 pitch. Wood products contain mercury too. We have
21 probably had, in the recent rash of fires in California
22 -- that fire alone, above LA, has produced more than a
23 122 pounds of mercury in the atmosphere. We get mercury
24 in the air from wild fires. We get it from volcanic
25 eruptions. We can get it from the combustion of any

1 carbon material. We get it when we are combusted in an
2 incinerator, if you're having your body burned. So it's
3 out there.

4 We're doing better. We're doing much better
5 than we were. Plant Scherer up here is going through a
6 massive clean-up operation. They will produce a thousand
7 pounds, at least, less mercury than they're doing now.
8 So, overall, we probably peak in mercury dumping in the
9 environment in the 1960s. We've taken mercury out of
10 pesticides. We use it in to fungicides. We don't do that
11 anymore. We have taken it out of a lot of chemical
12 operation. We aren't buying gold in North Georgia
13 anymore. There's several tons of mercury sitting around
14 in North Georgia streams, by the way. If you want to go
15 pan some, go pan some. I mean you can do it. Been
16 there. Done that. But we're cleaning up. We're getting
17 better.

18 Coal-fired plants are modern plant. No. It
19 is not perfectly non-polluting. Nothing ever will be.
20 But it's the best we got right now. And, yeah, I'm going
21 to be able to see that smoke stack on my road, but,
22 considering, the benefits it going to bring to my
23 county, yeah, I can live with it.

24 DUBOSE PORTER: May I respond?

25 MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC: Go ahead.

1 DUBOSE PORTER: The wood that would generate
2 -- it would not effect the rivers and streams,
3 especially river like the Ocmulgee the way it is now.
4 It is literally unsafe to eat the fish. The only way to
5 turn that around is to not have that kind of
6 concentration any more that would fall into other rivers
7 and streams. Studies from the Tech -- and and I'll be
8 glad to get to you.

9 MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC: I Would like to see
10 your figures, but --

11 DUBOSE PORTER: You have studies from Tech
12 and the Warnell School of Forestry, that I'll be glad to
13 provide you with.

14 MEMBER OF PUBLIC: Okay.

15 DEANNE FISHER: Deanne Fisher, Macon. I
16 don't think anyone is against jobs. One of my main
17 concerns, especially when people have started to burn a
18 lot of coal to keep the price down, to keep cheap
19 electricity. I wouldn't mind if they double my electric
20 rate if my health cost went down. I think as a society
21 we're paying a tremendous price when it comes to our
22 health. The only way that we're going to start reversing
23 these trends -- and I think those areas where pollution
24 -- I don't think it's enough. Thank you.

25