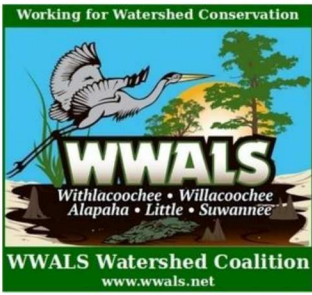
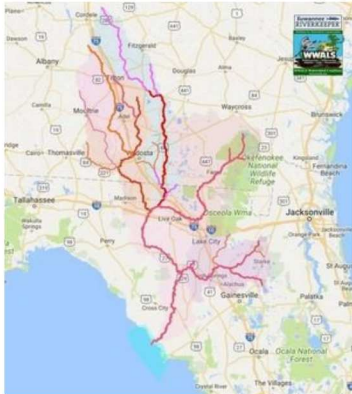


November 5, 2019



To: Jason Shaw, Commissioner, District 1
Georgia Public Service Commission
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WWALS is an IRS 501(c)(3)
nonprofit charity est. June 2012.

Mission: WWALS advocates for conservation and stewardship of the Withlacoochee, Willacoochee, Alapaha, Little, Santa Fe, and Suwannee River watersheds in south Georgia and north Florida through education, awareness, environmental monitoring, and citizen activities.



Re: Docket 42516 Georgia Power Company's 2019 Rate Case

Commissioner Shaw,

It was good to meet with you Thursday.

I have not met anyone unaffiliated with the electric power industry who supports a rate hike for Georgia Power, especially not a mandatory connection fee. Many people around here are already struggling to balance electric bills, grocery bills, and gas bills. A mandatory connection fee would most greatly affect those least able to afford it. Despite Georgia Power's arguments, the beneficiaries of such a rate hike would not be its customers, rather its investors, following a playbook spelled out by the electric utility industry think tank Edison Electricity Institute back in 2013.

I urge the Georgia Public Service Commission to reject Georgia Power's request for a connection fee raise, or at the least to make it as minimal as possible. Georgia Power as a regulated public utility should be "A Citizen Wherever We Serve," not an agent for its investors to get more profit at the expense of its customers.

It is not surprising that Georgia Power is in need of funds, due to Southern Company's failing Big Bet on Plant Vogtle eating up ever more money, and cleanup costs for the coal ash that Georgia Power generated over many years, knowing full well that some day it would have to be cleaned up.

Way back in 2013, Google had already bought enough wind and solar power to generate almost as much electricity as the two nuclear units at Plant Vogtle are some day supposed to produce, and Google paid less than the cost overruns for Vogtle at that time. <http://www.l-a-k-e.org/blog/?p=206> Six years later, Georgia Power customers are still paying for nuclear electricity they are not getting. As solar and wind power costs continue decreasing, how many years will it be before Georgia Power customers have to start paying for cleanup after the shutdown of Plant Vogtle? At least in South Carolina, citizens are not paying for further cost overruns before that happens. Georgia Power argues that none of the present rate hike is related to Plant Vogtle, but any source of income would help defray that Bad Big Bet.

Perhaps the executives and board members who were responsible for those unfortunate decisions should be the ones paying for the resulting shortfalls. As a Southern Company stockholder myself, I like the customary annual dividend increase, but I wonder why that should be more important than the economic well-being of Georgia Power's customers.

It is prudent for PSC staff to seek independent data and analysis of any claims Georgia Power makes in arguing for this rate increase. History shows such utility claims don't always match the best evidence available, for example the last time Georgia Power tried a similar rate hike.