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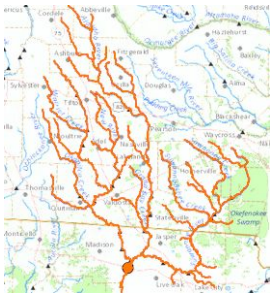

January 19, 2016

To: Suwannee County Board of County Commissioners,

Dear Commissioners,

Thanks again for your hospitality at your meeting of December 15th.

Solar and wind can make coal go away with no need for natural gas.

The FPL representative who spoke didn't seem aware of what Southern Company CEO Tom Fanning said about solar power last June: "If somebody wants to buy distributed generation, I want to sell it to 'em." See Herman K. Trabish, UtilityDive, June 11, 2015, "Inside Georgia Power's move into the residential solar market: The utility says it will offer solar through an unregulated business, but installers fear possible anticompetitive impacts":
http://www.utilitydive.com/news/inside-georgia-powers-move-into-the-residential-solar-market/400562/

That meeting gave me deja vu about a few years ago when Georgia Power and Southern Company were claiming Georgia was too cloudy just like that FPL rep said last month about Florida. Yet Georgia turned into the fastest-growing U.S. solar market, as I mentioned in my letter to you of December 15th. Did Georgia suddenly become less cloudy? No more than Florida needs to.

Also FPL has been pushing for a pipeline like Sabal Trail since its previous attempt was rejected in 2009 by the Florida Public Service Commission. So the other excuse I've heard from Sabal Trail and FPL that the federal Clean Power Plan requires shifting coal plants to natural gas is just that: an excuse. The Clean Power Plan didn't even exist back then, nor in 2013 when FPL let the contract to Spectra Energy for Sabal Trail. And while that Plan does make coal plants more expensive to run, it actually puts some barriers in the way of natural gas., while promoting truly renewable energy, namely solar and wind power. See Rachel Cleetus, Union of Concerned Scientists, August 7, 2015, "Four Ways the Final Clean Power Plan Limits the Rush to Natural Gas":
http://blog.ucsusa.org/rachel-cleetus/four-ways-the-final-clean-power-plan-limits-the-rush-to-natural-gas-839

It's not just Southern Company's Fanning who finally gets it that solar and wind are the future already here now. See Gavin Bade, Utility Dive, June 10, 2015, "EEI 2015: 5 major utility CEOs on the transformation of the energy system: Chiefs of Edison International, AEP, Exelon and Southern hold revealing panel discussion",

http://www.utilitydive.com/news/eei-2015-5-major-utility-ceos-on-the-transformation-of-the-energy-system/400530/

> *What [Edison International CEO Ted] Craver was more confident about, however, was [Tesla CEO Elon] Musk's prediction that in the long run, a third of generation will be distributed, which could also hurt load growth for utilities. To that, Southern's Fanning had a simple answer: "If distributed generation is eroding your growth, own distributed generation!"*
>
> *And [Dominion CEO Tom] Farrell's doing more than talk on that front. Last month, Georgia Power, a Southern subsidiary, announced it would enter the rooftop solar market.*

While FPL continues to plan more fracked methane power plants, and recently bought its parent NextEra Energy's fracking operation in Oklahoma, NextEra itself is rapidly getting deeper into solar power. NextEra subsidiary Nextera Energy Resources has solar operations in California, Nevada, New Mexico, and even New Jersey, but not in Florida. Is Florida cloudier with less sun than New Jersey?

http://www.nexteraenergyresources.com/what/solar.shtml
http://webtest.nexteraenergyresources.com/pdf_redesign/Paradise.pdf

NextEra's Yieldco NextEra Energy Partners (NEP) is even selling off its part of two Texas natural gas power plants, shedding 2,988 MW of dirty gas burning. Sure, NEP is still conflicted, also owning the NET Mexico Pipeline, exporting fracked methane to Mexico. But at least NEP is looking to the sun.

http://www.marketwatch.com/story/nextera-energy-resources-agrees-to-sell-texas-fossil-generating-assets-to-an-affiliate-of-energy-future-holdings-2015-11-27

Neither Southern Company nor NextEra are pioneers in the solar market. Back in 2003 when Austin, Texas was growing 10% per year and actually had to find new power sources (unlike Florida, which could reduce its power consumption with conservation and efficiency), Austin Energy examined options of buying into a nuclear power plant (tried before: late, overbudget, huge political opposition), a coal plant (but Austin is clean industry city) and finally ran the numbers on solar power. Result: spending as much money as a coal plant would cost instead on rebates for solar panels on house and business roofs would get just as much power, installed faster, and distributed so it didn't all go out at once.

So that's what Austin Energy did, a dozen years ago when solar panel prices were 50% higher than now. They've been followed by Cobb EMC, Georgia Power, and it looks like now NextEra.
http://www.l-a-k-e.org/blog/2012/04/austin-energy-changed-from-anti-solar-to-pro-solar-in-one-year.html

As mentioned in my previous letter, even FPL is finally starting to deploy solar farms in Florida.

Still many people rightly wonder, how can we go straight to clean energy, and how fast? Fortunately, somebody has already researched that, for each of the 50 U.S. states and for 135 countries, showing how to convert the electrical grid to sun, wind, and water power within about a decade with no need for any new technology, and everything else by 2050. Sure, there is new technology being developed, especially in power storage, and any new tech will accelerate the conversion of everything to clean sun, wind, and water power. The conversion is already happening right now with existing technology,

especially next door in Georgia. The only real impediments are politics and backwards laws, and Florida is poised to pass a solar financing law much like the one Georgia passed last year.
http://thesolutionsproject.org/

Here's an overview by Bjorn Carey, Stanford News, June 8, 2015, "Stanford engineers develop state-by-state plan to convert U.S. to 100% clean, renewable energy by 2050: Mark Z. Jacobson and colleagues show that it's technically possible for each state to replace fossil fuel energy with entirely clean, renewable energy."
https://news.stanford.edu/pr/2015/pr-50states-renewable-energy-060815.html

Here's a 138-page peer-reviewed paper, "100% clean and renewable wind, water, and sunlight (WWS) all-sector energy roadmaps for the 50 United States," Energy Environ. Sci., 2015, 8, 2093:
https://web.stanford.edu/group/efmh/jacobson/Articles/I/USStatesWWS.pdf

So why would FPL want to add still more natural gas when Florida already gets 60% of its power from that one source, thus putting the whole state at risk of the vulnerabilities of a few pipelines into the state when the sun shines on everyone and the wind blows offshore? It could be because the old ways bring easier profits through PSC-guaranteed annual profits for big baseload capacity power plants. Profits at the expense of Suwannee County landowners and taxpayers, not to mention FPL ratepayers.

But Southern Company's Tom Fanning answered that, too, in the same article about the 5 utility CEOs:

> *Distributed generation, Fanning said, is not disruptive. In fact, it's a "natural evolution of central station generation."*
>
> *Asked by Greentech Media during the media availability how it responds to anticompetitive concerns from solar providers, Fanning said that his utility is simply responding to customer desires. Consumers want solar, and they want it from a trusted provider, so Georgia Power will enter the market. From his perspective, distributed generation is little different from central station generation, except for the benefit that it's closer to the customer, minimizing line losses.*

Fanning wasn't saying any of that a year ago, I can say from attending Southern Company stockholder meetings for years. That's how fast a big utility can turn to the sun. Back to the article:

> *Utilities know more about the grid than anyone, [Exelon Corp. CEO and EEI Chairman Nick] Akins ["who runs the biggest coal generator in the country"] said in backing up Fanning, so they should be the distributed generation providers if consumers want it. What's more, he said, utilities can ensure that distributed generation can be deployed for all customers, while solar installers have tended to eschew low income communities with fewer means to pay for their product.*

Southern Company has the biggest private utility R&D operation in the country. If it and Exelon and Dominion are moving ahead into solar power, with even FPL's parent NextEra Energy apparently joining them, FPL is a drag on the economy, water, air, and health of the state of Florida by pushing more fracked methane when solar power is already here right now ready for the Sunshine State.

FPL probably didn't tell you most of this, but you can see it's all well documented.

As an advocate of watershed conservation and stewardship, WWALS has long opposed new pipelines and promoted solar power, including sending two board members to testify at a Georgia Public Service Commission meeting in June 2013 shortly before the GA PSC required Georgia Power to buy twice as much solar power as it wanted, putting Georgia Power and Southern Company on the path to a clean solar future they finally chose last year, turning Georgia into the fastest-growing U.S. solar market. WWALS now advocates the same for Florida.

Which do you want for Suwannee County? Bringing up the caboose of the 20th century with still more natural gas pipelines taking easements from local citizens' property and risking their air and water while drilling under the Suwannee and Santa Fe Rivers and the Falmouth Cave System and risking our sole-source of drinking water, the Floridan Aquifer? Or getting on with the conversion already under way to solar power inland and wind offshore that doesn't require eminent domain, doesn't leak, burn, explode, or cause sinkholes, plus is faster to install and more dependable?

Thanks again for your hospitality, and I write in the spirit I'm sure we all share of conservation and stewardship of all our waters.

Sincerely,

[/S]

John S. Quarterman, President

229-242-0102