

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

www.BREDL.org PO Box 88 Glendale Springs, North Carolina 28629 BREDL@skybest.com (336) 982-2691

**For Immediate Release
August 17, 2010**

**Contacts:
Jim Dougherty: 202-488-1140
Louis Zeller: 336-977-0852
Arnold Gundersen: 802-865-9955
David Kyler: 912-638-3612
Bobbie Paul: 678-938-2598**

Corrosion, Cracks in Nuclear Reactor Building Would Make Plant Unsafe Groups File New Legal Challenge at Plant Vogtle

Last week three Georgia groups revealed new public safety hazards in their ongoing campaign against nuclear expansion at Plant Vogtle. On August 12, 2010 the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, the Center for a Sustainable Coast and Georgia Women's Action for New Directions filed a legal challenge based on potential radioactive emissions from the proposed nuclear reactors. The specific flaw they identified is that corrosion will cause holes or cracks in the containment structure of the two reactors, allowing uncontrolled radioactive emissions during an accident.

The August 12th legal brief filed with the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board by the groups' attorney Jim Dougherty states: "SNC's [license application] fails to demonstrate that Vogtle Units 3 and 4 can be operated safely because the containment and containment-coating inspection regime proposed in the [safety report] fails to provide assurance against corrosion-caused penetrations of the containment that would lead, in the event of an accident, to leakage to the environment of radioactive materials in excess of regulatory requirements."

Louis Zeller, Science Director for the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, explained why the groups took this action. He said, "We found a fatal flaw and brought

-more-

it to the attention of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Southern Nuclear Company has overlooked a major problem which we simply cannot allow to go unchallenged.” He continued, “The fundamental requirement of the operator is to protect public health and safety. Southern Nuclear Company is not doing its job.”

Arnold Gundersen, the nuclear engineer working with the groups, described the flaw as a “chimney effect.” He said that the proposed Vogtle nuclear reactors’ unusually high vulnerability to corrosion and its lack of a secondary containment system would present an unusually high risk, in the event of a reactor accident.

Speaking on behalf of the Center for a Sustainable Coast, David Kyler said, “The risks to public safety which we are talking about here are unjustified. We must ensure wise choices for protection of the public, especially when there are long term risks.”

Bobbie Paul, Executive Director of Georgia WAND, called for the public safety issue to be addressed immediately, adding, “Let’s hope that precaution can finally lead the way. The safety of these new reactors is a serious environmental justice issue affecting all those living in the shadow of nuclear Plant Vogtle.”

Southern Nuclear Company and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff are expected to reply to the groups’ latest initiative. After they respond, the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board will decide on further proceedings.

-end-

The legal filing is posted at

<http://www.bredl.org/pdf2/100812BREDLSupplemental-contention-w-AG-dec.pdf>

On the following page is a diagram of the chimney effect which would allow the release of radiation. For more information, go to Fairewinds Associates at:

<http://www.fairewinds.com/>

