

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

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US Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of New Reactors
Region II Office
245 Peachtree Center Ave., NE
Atlanta, GA 30303

RE: Status of the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant Units 3 and 4

I am Rev. Willie Tomlin and I have been a pastor in Burke County for over 42 years. I am a member of the Shell Bluff community. I am also a member of The Concerned Citizens of Shell Bluff, a chapter of The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League.

We are concerned about the safety of people who live in the shadow of Plant Vogtle. On September 29, 2010 the Office of New Reactors approved three requests to withhold information from public disclosure.¹ We believe the requests were improper. The information was about the nuclear reactor's containment shield building for the plant which is under discussion here today. As you know, the problems with this plant were made clear by your own engineer, who said that this building could shatter like a "glass cup."² In addition to shielding the reactor, the building must support a water-filled cooling tank which weighs over 3,000 tons. Over a year ago we made an official request to the Chairman of the NRC to release this critical safety information, but we have not even had the courtesy of a reply. Why is this information being kept secret? Today I ask again, in the interest of public health and safety, that you release this information.

I am very much concerned that this will add to the problems we already have. Already, Plant Vogtle's discharge of radioactive Tritium pollutes the Savannah River all the way to the ocean. Public drinking water supplies are contaminated.³ Other radioactive pollutants, including Cesium-137 and Cobalt-60, have also increased downstream from the Vogtle reactors since they began operation.

The problem extends to other areas. Southern Company is the largest global warming gas emitter in the nation. In fact, the two largest carbon polluters in the nation, Plant Scherer and Plant Bowen operated by Georgia Power, alone emit more carbon dioxide than all the power plants in the entire state of California.⁴ If you are not faithful over what you already have, how can you be faithful over what you get?

Respectfully,

Rev. Willie Tomlin

¹ ADAMS Accession Nos. ML102660263, ML102670260 and ML102660378

² Dr. John S. Ma, "Dissenting View on the AP1000 Shield Building Safety Evaluation Report With Respect to the Acceptance of Brittle Structural Module to be used for the Cylindrical Shield Building Wall," 4 November 2010

³ Beaufort/Jasper County Water Treatment Plant and Cherokee Hill Water Treatment Plant recorded 17% increase in beta radiation in finished drinking water and 37% increase in beta radiation in raw water supply.

⁴ "Getting Warmer: US CO2 Emissions from Power Plants-Emissions Rise 5.6% in 2010," Environmental Integrity Project, 2/18/11