

# Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

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## For Immediate Release

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## League Identifies, Challenges Vogtle Relaxed Construction Standard

In a legal petition to the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League has identified three major problems with the Plant Vogtle nuclear power plant related to construction and radiation exposure levels. The League filed the petition Monday with its Burke County chapter, the Concerned Citizens of Shell Bluff, who submitted 63 affidavits supporting the action.

The petition states that 1) the plant does not meet minimum industry construction standards, 2) the plant would not keep plant workers exposure to radiation as low as achievable, and 3) the licensing agency has failed to properly consider disproportionate impacts to the residents living near the plant.

Rev. Charles Utley, the League's Environmental Justice Project Director, said, "For Southern Company to request such a dangerous change in standards for the construction of Plant 3 and 4 is unacceptable by the residents living in the surrounding counties. This request has raised great concern and doubt in the minds of the residents. Has the focus changed from the quality of construction and the quality of life to overrun costs and missed deadlines? The residents in their declarations with a resounding voice say 'no' to this request."

Louis A. Zeller, the League's Executive Director, said, "Southern Company is

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rushing to get approval for a reduction in construction standards. According to the experts, the existing standard is in need of improvement. Southern Company's attempt to relax the standard goes in exactly the wrong direction. Southern Company submitted a Preliminary Amendment Request which would permit the relaxed standards before a thorough review by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Zeller added, "If permitted by the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the changes would alter the reactors' critical radiation shielding walls. BREDL and Concerned Citizens of Shell Bluff oppose the license amendment because it would endanger plant safety, plant personnel and the surrounding community."

Under federal rules of procedure 10 C.F.R. § 2.309 and a notice published by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in the Federal Register, on December 7, 2015 the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and its chapter Concerned Citizens of Shell Bluff petitioned for leave to intervene and requested a hearing.

Southern Company now has 25 days to file a reply. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission must then consider the petition and decide whether to grant Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League a hearing.

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The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League was founded in 1984 by people concerned about a national nuclear waste dump in the southern Appalachian Mountains. The public education campaign launched by the League and others helped to create regional resistance. The US Department of Energy abandoned the plan in 1988. Today the League has offices in Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia.

**PETITION ATTACHED**