

Good evening, my name is _____ and I respectfully submit these comments to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division regarding the draft permits for the proposed coal fired power plant in Sandersville, GA- Plant Washington.

I. Air Permit:

If this coal plant is permitted it will emit a number of toxic pollutants that will have an impact on Georgia's air quality including particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, sulfuric acid, carbon monoxide, lead, and mercury. Many of these pollutants such as sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide play a lead role in causing respiratory diseases like asthma. The lives of nearly 10,000 people are cut short every year in the region due to particulate matter pollution from coal-fired power plants. Mercury, a potent neurotoxin, has already impaired the waters of Georgia making fish risky to eat and yet Plant Washington would emit and additional 120 pounds of mercury each year – far more than other comparably sized coal plants complying with tight Maximum Achievable Control Technology standards. This coal plant will only exacerbate our existing, serious, air and water quality problems.

In addition, over 6.2 million tons of carbon dioxide, will be emitted every year. As you know, carbon dioxide is the leading global warming pollutant and is currently under consideration by the Environmental Protection Agency through the “Endangerment Finding” for formal classification as a criteria pollutant. Given, that federal carbon regulations are imminent it would be irresponsible for EPD to issue these permits without taking into consideration the grave concerns the world has about these emissions and the very real threat of regulation.

II. Ground, Surface Water Withdrawal, and Discharge Permits:

If this plant is permitted it will withdraw up to 16 million gallons of water every day through a 30-mile pipeline to the Oconee River. In addition, 16 wells will be dug along the pipeline to extract groundwater from the Cretaceous Aquifer for use during periods of drought. This plant poses a significant risk to the groundwater aquifer, a finite resource. Withdraws from both of these water sources will compete heavily with other water uses such as Georgia's citizens and local businesses. Middle Georgia cannot afford to lose so much of its precious water to a highly consumptive coal plant such as Plant Washington, particularly as we face unusual climatic challenges including extreme drought like we experienced throughout 2007.

In addition, the water that is returned to the Oconee River poses the risk of causing thermal pollution, threatening aquatic life of every kind. The water returned to the river is significantly warmer than the water withdrawn. Thermal pollution can impact aquatic ecosystems by affecting the local breeding habits of various fish species and limiting the level of oxygen in the water supply.

III. Solid Waste Storage Permit:

Plant Washington is estimated to generate between 500 and 570 acre-feet of coal combustion waste every year, enough to cover a football field with ash and sludge to the height of a 40-story building. Coal combustion waste includes arsenic, lead, boron, selenium, cadmium, thallium,

heavy metals and other toxic pollutants at levels that pose risk to human health. Dangerous toxic spills, such as TVA's Kingston coal ash disaster are a reality and threaten every aspect of our ecosystems and quality of life. The residents of the communities around the proposed Plant Washington deserve a better quality of life than having a toxic waste pond as their backyard neighbor. With the plant expected to run over the course of many decades, sub-standard safe management of this waste will become more of a challenge.

In conclusion, as a Georgia citizen I am concerned with how this coal plant will impact the air, land, and water quality in our state as well as the health of all Georgia citizens. It is the mission of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division *to protect and restore Georgia's environment and take the lead in ensuring clean air, water and land*. I urge EPD to follow this mission and deny the Plant Washington draft permits.