

and for good reason, from Pilgrim in Massachusetts,⁴ to Duane Arnold in Iowa,⁵ to the iconic Three Mile Island “China Syndrome” plant in Pennsylvania. Nuclear plants, just like coal, cannot compete against the continually decreasing prices of solar and wind power.

In 2017, the Mississippi PSC told Southern Company subsidiary Mississippi Power it could not charge any more costs of Kemper “Clean” Coal to its ratepayers, causing that project to cease.⁶ The two nuclear units building at Plant Vogtle are just as much of a bad Big Bet as was Kemper Coal.

5) I urge the PSC to stop more money and renewable energy opportunity costs from being wasted on that years-late and far-over-budget Plant Vogtle project.

Unfortunately, the Kemper coal power plant site merely switched over to natural gas, which is just more stranded assets and renewable energy opportunity costs, similar to Southern Company’s purchase of AGL, including the AGL pipeline of the Homerville explosion..

At the May 22rd Southern Company (SO) Stockholder meeting,⁷ SO CEO Tom Fanning briefly alluded to the Homerville explosion. I clarified for the stockholders that the gas that exploded came from an AGL pipeline. I thanked the CEO of Southern Company Gas, Kimberly S. Greene, for some work she instigated at my request on the other end of that same pipeline, which originates on my property. As she described the result of that work, AGL now has a state-of-the-art pipeline station. As I described it in the stockholder meeting, that is like a gold-plated horse buggy in 1919, after the Model T came out.

The Southern Company Proxy Statement emphasizes a “low carbon future.”⁸ Yet the Annual Report shows Southern Company’s total power mix percentages for coal plus natural gas diminished over the last decade by almost exactly the same percentage as its solar and wind power increased.⁹ As I pointed out to the stockholders, the fossil fuel mix certainly did not decrease because of Plant Vogtle, which still has not delivered any power.

Tom Fanning defended that fossil fuel mix by saying Southern Company had closed many coal plants and natural gas burns cleaner, producing less carbon dioxide. While I thank Southern Company and Georgia Power for closing coal plants, the methane that is most of natural gas is a much worse greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.¹⁰ That methane leaks far more than the pipeline industry admits,¹¹ all along the line, from fracking, to pipelines, to power plants, to liquid natural gas (LNG) exports, and in LNG liquefaction plants such as the six AGL owns, three in Georgia, and one each in Tennessee, Alabama, and Florida. Of course sometimes that methane explodes, as happened in Homerville. For that matter, part of CEO Fanning’s compensation is now tied to reductions in greenhouse gases (GHG), not just reductions in carbon.

Tom Fanning attempted to justify SO’s purchases of pipeline companies by saying SO needs a bridge to renewable energy. That gave me *deja vu*, since I had not heard anybody say “bridge fuel” for about five years. Sure, ten years ago even Sierra Club was saying that. But

⁴ "You Asked, We Answered: Questions About The Pilgrim Shutdown," Bruce Gellerman, Barbara Moran, and Miriam Wasser, WBUR, 28 May 2019, <https://www.wbur.org/earthwhile/2019/05/28/plymouth-plant-decommissioning-questions>

⁵ "Powering down: Iowa's only nuclear plant nears end; Palo facility can't compete with cheaper sources of energy," Mitchell Schmidt, The Gazette, 5 May 2019, <https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/powering-down-iowas-only-nuclear-plant-nears-end-20190505>

⁶ "Mississippi Power will stop efforts to complete coal plant," Jeff Amy, Associated Press, 3:56 p.m. CT June 28, 2017, Updated 6:52 p.m. CT June 29, 2017, <https://www.clarionledger.com/story/business/2017/06/28/kemper-coal-power-plant-stop/437150001/>

⁷ "Webcast: 2019 Southern Company Annual Meeting of Stockholders," Southern Company, 22 May 2019, https://players.brightcove.net/18122129001/default_default/index.html?videoId=6039940118001 in "Webcasts & Presentations," Southern Company, accessed 8 June 2019, <https://investor.southerncompany.com/information-for-investors/investor-information/webcasts-and-presentations/default.aspx>

⁸ "Notice of Annual Meeting of Stockholders and Proxy Statement," Southern Company, May 2019, https://www.southerncompanyannualmeeting.com/media/2517/346338-1-_35_southern-company_nps_wr-spread-_r1.pdf

⁹ "Energy for Life, 2018 Annual Report," Southern Company, May 2019, https://www.southerncompanyannualmeeting.com/media/2600/4000_final_so_2018ar_spreads.pdf

¹⁰ "Understanding Global Warming Potentials," U.S. EPA, accessed 7 June 2019, <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/understanding-global-warming-potentials>

¹¹ "The US natural gas industry is leaking way more methane than previously thought. Here's why that matters," Anthony J. Marchese and Dan Zimmerle, The Conversation, 2 July 2018, <http://theconversation.com/the-us-natural-gas-industry-is-leaking-way-more-methane-than-previously-thought-heres-why-that-matters-98918>