

Jeff Sinyard represents southwest Georgia on the Board of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. He is our voice on that very important and powerful Board.

Sabal Trail Pipeline needs easements granted by the DNR Board to pass under key southwest and south-central Georgia rivers and creeks. Elsewhere in Georgia, over to the east and on the coast, Governor Deal's DOT recently blocked the use of eminent domain for a gas and diesel pipeline. The Governor does not have the same power over natural gas pipelines under Georgia law. However, the Governor's DNR Board does have the power to block key easements, and the Governor's Environmental Protection Division does have the power to deny a key air emissions permit for the compressor station. So, even though our leaders cannot directly block the use of eminent domain for the Sabal Trail project, they do have indirect means to work to protect private property owners, communities, and our creeks and rivers. They should use them.

Folks around Albany have been saying that Sabal Trail is a "done deal" since the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission a few days back. Nothing could be further from the truth. First, the statement is only a draft, and is flawed in that it ignores or dismisses numerous substantive concerns raised by opponents in Southwest Georgia. The document will go through a revision process. Second, there are several key permits, some state, some federal, that must be obtained, permits that can be appealed if they are written incorrectly. Third, the pipeline must obtain easements across private and public property, either by eminent domain, purchase, or permission. Jeff Sinyard can take an important step, this week, to impair the use of eminent domain by the pipeline company by making a motion, getting a second, and working to get a majority vote of the GA DNR board to table action on these state easements under our creeks and rivers. Even easier, Mr. Sinyard can request that the easement item simply be taken off of the DNR Board's agenda. Call Mr. Sinyard, right now (229 255 2332 or 229 435 6257), and urge him to do the right thing. Table the easements. Protect our private property, communities, creeks, and rivers.

(signed)

S. Gordon Rogers, Flint Riverkeeper, Albany

John S. Quarterman, President, WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc., Valdosta

Mark Woodall, Vice Chair, Sierra Club Georgia Chapter, Woodland