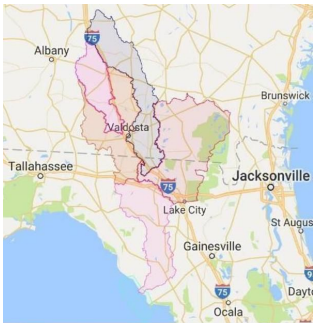




WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc.



the WATERKEEPER® Alliance
Member for the Suwannee,
Withlacoochee and Alapaha Rivers



- Upper Suwannee River HUC 03110201
- Withlacoochee River HUC 03110203
- Alapaha River HUC 03110202
- Little River HUC 03110204
- Lower Suwannee River HUC 03110205
- Suwannee River Estuary

WWALS Watershed Coalition advocates for conservation and stewardship of the Withlacoochee, Willacochee, Alapaha, Little, and Suwannee River watersheds in south Georgia and north Florida through education, awareness, environmental monitoring, and citizen activities.



August 2, 2017

To: [Georgia Public Service Commission](http://www.gapsc.com)
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334-9052
gapsc@psc.state.ga.us

Re: Electric cars and solar power are here now; South Carolina cancels its nuclear project
Dear Public Service Commissioners and Staff,

Since my letter of July 23, 2017, asking you to stop cost overruns for Plant Vogtle and to require Georgia Power again to buy more solar power,¹ there have been major developments that further indicate the desirability of these actions.

Tesla is now shipping its Model 3, which many consider the Model T of the electric car industry, affordable not just to executives, but to the masses. New York City changed in thirteen years from all but one horse-drawn carriages to all but one automobiles in its Easter Parade: 1900 to 1913,² and not much longer for the rest of the country, after the Ford Model T shipped in 1908.



We're well past 1900 in the electric vehicle revolution, and that is a rapidly growing market for solar panels on business and house roofs.

In *The Hill* yesterday:³

South Carolina Electric & Gas Co. (SCE&G) and state-run Santee Cooper both said Monday they would suspend their plan to build two nuclear reactors at the V.C. Summer power plant northwest of Columbia.

The companies cited cost overruns and construction delays, as well as the bankruptcy of lead contractor Westinghouse.

The Santee Cooper board of directors voted unanimously on Monday morning to pull out of the project. In a statement, the company said the decision would save customers \$7 billion in construction fees, which have already cost \$4.7 billion.

SCE&G later announce that it, too, would cease work on the power plant.

Those are the same reasons the Georgia Public Service Commission, Georgia Power, and Southern Company should abandon their failed Big Bet on Plant Vogtle.

The New York Times explicitly links the two projects:⁴

¹ "Stop failed Big Bet on nuclear Plant Vogtle and go solar: WWALS to GA-PSC," John S. Quarterman, WWALS, July 23, 2017, <http://www.wwals.net/?p=35414>
² "5th Avenue, 1900 Vs. 1913," Joe Weisenthal, Business Insider, March 31, 2011, referencing a Morgan Stanley report; 1900 picture from National Archives; 1913 picture from George Grantham Bain Collection, both taken of Fifth Avenue, <http://www.businessinsider.com/5th-ave-1900-vs-1913-2011-3>
³ "South Carolina companies scrap \$14 billion nuclear project," Devin Henry, The Hill, July 31, 2017, <http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/344628-south-carolina-companies-scrap-14-billion-nuclear-project>
⁴ "U.S. Nuclear Comeback Stalls as Two Reactors Are Abandoned," Brad Plumerjuly, July 31, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/31/climate/nuclear-power-project-canceled-in-south-carolina.html>

The two nuclear reactors still being built in Georgia are both AP1000s at the existing Vogtle nuclear power plant. Southern Company [has agreed to take over construction of the Vogtle reactors in the aftermath of Westinghouse's bankruptcy](#), but that project is also facing delays and overruns. The reactors will have to come online before 2021 to qualify for federal tax credits, although Congress is working on a bill to extend that deadline.

Same reactor model, same Westinghouse bankruptcy, same kind of delays and cost overruns: the parallels could not be much clearer with Georgia Power's Plant Vogtle. Add the Mississippi Public Service Commission decision to stop cost overruns for Southern Company's Kemper "clean" Coal, and the handwriting on the wall could not be easier to read.

Yet both *The Hill* and *The New York Times* are living in the past. *The Hill* mentions only natural gas as a competitor to nuclear, even though more new U.S. electricity last year came from solar power than from anything else: more than natural gas, far more than nuclear, and more even than wind. *The New York Times* says South Carolina coal plants won't be shut down without those new nuclear units, yet Georgia Power is already shutting down coal plants without that.

Most of the stories about this South Carolina decision do not mention solar power at all. *The New York Times* has one clause about "smaller wind and solar farms."

The time for thinking small about wind and solar power has passed. Exponential growth like compound interest, like personal computers, mobile phones, smart phones, and the Internet according to Moore's Law, is driving wind and solar up far faster than any other power sources, with solar faster than wind. When I spoke before you in 2013, solar power was like 1993, when the Internet was still a novelty to most people. Now it's like 1997, when the World Wide Web already took off, and Amazon was well on the way to disrupting retail. Georgia does not need to wait for some other state or region to lead in solar power onshore and wind offshore.

I first heard this South Carolina news from Mark Z. Jacobson, the Stanford professor with the plan to convert first the electric grid to all sun wind, and water power,⁵ and then everything else, including heating, cooling, and transportation; see above about 1900 vs. 1913.

Everything WWALS said in our 2013 letter⁶ about water use by Plant Vogtle vs. solar power is still true: those new nuclear units would use more water than the city of Savannah, while solar panels use none. Every dollar spent on Plant Vogtle is a ratepayer or tax dollar that can instead buy more solar power for Georgia, and the rest of the Southeast, the country, and the world, while shutting down more coal plants, and *not* deploying any new pipelines or natural gas plants.

The Georgia Public Service Commission can end Georgia Power's cost overruns for Plant Vogtle, and that will probably end that failed Big Bet, freeing up many resources for solar power in Georgia and wind power offshore.

For the rivers and the aquifer,

John S. Quarterman, Suwannee Riverkeeper
President, WWALS Watershed Coalition
229-242-0102

⁵ "Stanford engineers develop state-by-state plan to convert U.S. to 100% clean, renewable energy by 2050," Bjorn Carey, Stanford News Service, June 8, 2015, <http://news.stanford.edu/pr/2015/pr-50states-renewable-energy-060815.html> and <http://thesolutionsproject.org/>

⁶ "Ask Georgia Power to conserve our water," WWALS Watershed Coalition to Georgia Public Service Commission, May 12, 2013, <http://www.wwals.net/?p=679>, read to GA-PSC by WWALS board member Garry Gentry, June 18, 2013, <http://www.l-a-k-e.org/blog/?p=4241>