

# TRUTH TO POWER

## witness on record at the Georgia Public Service Commission

**FACT ONE:** Georgia Power's own annual reports show that only two-thirds of its existing generating capacity is needed to supply Georgia's declining demand for electricity.

**FACT TWO:** Georgia Power insists on building two new reactors at Plant Vogtle anyway, never bothering to explain why it is spending billions on unnecessary new capacity.

**FACT THREE:** The Georgia Assembly and the Public Service Commission have authorized Georgia Power to charge ratepayers in advance to finance this construction, instead of investing its own money.

**FACT FOUR:** The state of Georgia has guaranteed Georgia Power a 10.5% profit throughout the construction process, regardless of how efficient or cost-effective the project is.

**FACT FIVE:** Georgia Power's annual profits have climbed to unprecedented heights even as the construction of Vogtle 3 and 4 has shot ridiculously over budget and fallen woefully behind schedule.

These facts have been pointed out again and again by citizens testifying at so-called hearings like this one. Georgia Power has succeeded in striking this testimony from expert witnesses in the past, but it has never bothered to contest the data or the facts. Data, facts, logic and mathematics clearly have no influence in this room.

Since I'm not a lawyer or a politician, just an ordinary citizen with two eyes and a brain, I can only think of one way to add up these uncontested facts. Georgia Power wants our money and feels no need to disguise its gluttony by pretending to be serving any legitimate public interest. Not only is the Emperor wearing no clothes, but this is the ugliest emperor that ever paraded naked down Peachtree Street!

But why would elected officials like the Public Service Commission give their rubber-stamp of approval to a utility selling its customers something they don't need and can't refuse, at an undeserved profit?



Vogtle 3 & 4 construction March 2019. Photo ©2019 Glenn Carroll

Am I looking at five public servants who are that naïve and gullible, or is the Public Service Commission actually as corrupt as it appears?

Despite the overwhelming evidence pointing to one or the other of these two conclusions, I am embarrassed to live in a state that's run like a fiefdom of the Russian mob. Surely there is some more dignified explanation?

Here's what I've come up with:

These five individuals in front of me are neither simpleminded nor engaged in collusion with the Russian mob. They are simply overzealous members of one of those bizarre religious cults my parents used to warn me about, blinded by a fervent devotion to money and a devout faith in technology.

Nuclear energy is the most expensive form of electricity ever devised. Without extravagant taxpayer subsidies at every step, from uranium mining to waste

disposal, the industry would never have generated a single volt, much less turned a profit. But thanks to those subsidies, Georgia Power and its fellow nuclear profiteers have grown obscenely rich and powerful. What fanatical worshipper at the altar of money could resist a deity as rich and powerful as Georgia Power?

Nuclear energy is also the most technically complex form of electricity ever devised. That's why it's so expensive. Even though renewable technologies like solar and wind are cheaper, safer, and more sustainable, they are far too simple. They don't lend themselves to centralized control of energy production, massive utility monopolies, or corporate welfare handouts. What true believer in the magical powers of technology could resist the spell of nuclear energy?

But regardless of what form of spiritual self-delusion the Public Service Commission practices, there are two additional facts we must consider. The five commissioners are charged with protecting the

interests of Georgia's electricity consumers, regardless of their personal religious affiliation. And the Constitution of the United States does clearly forbid basing public policy on religious doctrine.

I am neither a lawyer nor a politician, nor a Georgia Power stockholder, so it's obvious to me that this regulatory body has consistently and repeatedly violated the trust it was elected to uphold. Far worse, your blind idolatry of nuclear power has unnecessarily placed the people who elected you in danger of radioactive catastrophe in the event of an earthquake, terrorist attack, or simple human error. As the faithful devotees of Tokyo Electric Power Company and their government enablers discovered, their faith did not lift them up to the clouds when the apocalypse came.

But it's not too late to repent. You have time to think it over. At least I hope so.

— Stephen Wingeier

PSC Testimony, December 18, 2018