

# HAMPTON ROADS COAL PLANT TALKING POINTS

## MAIN POINT

Old Dominion Electric Cooperative's proposal to build a massive \$6 billion coal plant near Williamsburg is concerning and out of touch. At a time when Virginia – and the nation – is moving towards a clean energy future, the Cypress Creek coal plant would be a giant step in the wrong direction.

## FISCALLY IRRESPONSIBLE

Given the recession, the plant's \$6 billion price tag is wildly irresponsible. The cost becomes even more concerning when you consider that it does not take into account an inevitable cap on carbon emissions – something President Obama called for within weeks of taking office -- that will drive up the cost of burning coal.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

Coal contributes more to climate change than any other fossil fuel and the Cypress Creek plant will spew out about 15 million tons of global warming pollution – the equivalent of adding nearly 3 million new cars to the road each year. With over 3,000 miles of tidal shoreline, Virginia's coasts from Alexandria to Norfolk are extremely vulnerable to increased storm surges and rising seas caused by climate change. The Hampton Roads area – home to the world's largest naval station – is second only to New Orleans in its vulnerability to sea level rise.<sup>1</sup>

## ALTERNATIVES

If we're going to re-power Virginia in a way that's fiscally responsible and addresses the very real threat of climate change, we need to invest in efficiency first and move toward clean and renewable sources of energy such as wind and solar power.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

An assessment of Virginia's energy efficiency potential conducted by the independent American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) found that by investing in readily available and affordable efficiency measures, Virginia could keep energy use flat until 2025, avoiding the need to build new power plants. Investing in energy efficiency would also create 10,000 new jobs whereas ODEC's plant would only create 150-200 permanent jobs.

## CLIMATE COMMISSION

The very same week that ODEC proposed its coal plant, Governor Kaine's Commission on Climate Change released a report recommending that Virginia meet 19% of its energy demands through efficiency measures

by 2025 – a recommendation that echoed the ACEEE's findings.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

Virginia is windy enough to support utility-scale wind farms<sup>ii</sup> and yet Virginia doesn't have a single wind turbine. In fact, only two percent of Virginia's energy comes from renewable sources like wind or solar.<sup>iii</sup>

## DIRTY ENERGY

Instead of investing in efficiency and clean energy, Virginia is stuck with outdated and dirty energy that is hurting our economy, our health, and our environment. Virginia gets half of its electricity from coal, the dirtiest fuel on the planet.

## MOUAINTOP REMOVAL

Energy from coal is ALWAYS dirty. Much of the coal mined in Virginia comes from mountaintop removal mining. Twenty-nine mountains in Virginia and a quarter (25%) of the land in southwest Virginia's Wise County have been destroyed as a result of strip mining and mountaintop removal. This is an incredibly devastating mining practice that eliminates jobs, pollutes the air and water, and devastates entire communities. ODEC has said that its Cypress Creek plant is going to get much of its coal from central Appalachia, where most all of the mountaintop removal mining takes place.

## POLLUTION

If it proceeds, a plant up to triple the size of Dominion's Wise County operation would be built close to tributaries of the James River and Chesapeake Bay and their sensitive crab and oyster spawning grounds. It would emit toxic smog-producing air pollution just miles from Colonial Williamsburg, spew out millions of tons of global warming pollution, and will deposit harmful amounts of the neurotoxin mercury into our waterways.

## MERCURY

Burning coal is one of the leading causes of man-made mercury pollution in the U.S. After mercury is released and enters the air it then comes down with the rain and enters our water ways. After the mercury enters our waterways it accumulates in fish and other animals and people who eat them, causing damage to the brain as well as a number of developmental problems to unborn children and infants. This coal plant will be only 15 miles from the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The largest amount of mercury deposition happens within a 75 mile radius.

## NATIONAL STAGE

The nation stands at a crossroads. Our planet is heating up and our economy is suffering in large part because of our dependence on fossil fuels. We must pass bold climate legislation *this year* and no plan to address climate change is complete without a moratorium on coal plants that emit global warming pollution. Virginia is considering building *two* new coal plants – one in Wise County and one in Surry County. Our efforts to stop these controversial coal plants in this coal-reliant state are not only critical for the future of our state, they're also battles with national implications.

## ACT NOW

This is a critical year both in Virginia and for our nation. We know there are job-creating non-polluting alternatives to coal. Now it's up to us to make sure we move Virginia towards a clean energy future.

<sup>i</sup> Virginia Commission on Climate Change, "Final Report: A Climate Change Action Plan." Available at [http://www.deq.virginia.gov/export/sites/default/info/documents/climate/CCC\\_Final\\_Report-Final\\_12152008.pdf](http://www.deq.virginia.gov/export/sites/default/info/documents/climate/CCC_Final_Report-Final_12152008.pdf), page 19.

<sup>ii</sup> U.S. Department of Energy: "Virginia Resource Map. Available at <http://www.windpoweringamerica.gov/maps/template.asp?stateab=VA>

<sup>iii</sup> U.S. Department of Energy: "Electric Power and Renewable Energy in Virginia." Available at <http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/states/electricity/cfm/state=VA#electricity>



## NEWSPAPERS SERVING THE COOP AREAS

### **The Recorder**

9300 Sam Snead Hwy  
Hot Springs, VA 24445  
[recordernews@htcnet.org](mailto:recordernews@htcnet.org)

### **Virginian Review**

128 N Maple Ave  
Covington, VA 24426  
[virginianreview@aol.com](mailto:virginianreview@aol.com)

### **The New Student Chronicle**

308 Jackson Ave  
Lexington, VA 24450  
540-463-4000

### **Augusta Free Press**

531 W Main St Ste 220  
Waynesboro, VA 22980  
[freepress@ntelos.net](mailto:freepress@ntelos.net)

### **News Virginian**

1300 W Main Street  
Waynesboro, VA 22980  
[rfalls@newsvirginian.com](mailto:rfalls@newsvirginian.com)

### **Daily News-Record**

231 South Liberty Street  
P.O. Box 193  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801  
<http://www.dnronline.com/letteredit.php?LID=0>  
[kirkwood@dnronline.com](mailto:kirkwood@dnronline.com)

### **The Valley Banner**

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[vbads@comcast.net](mailto:vbads@comcast.net)  
[http://www.dnronline.com/vb\\_index.php](http://www.dnronline.com/vb_index.php)

### **News Leader**

Newsleader.com  
[letters@newsleader.com](mailto:letters@newsleader.com)  
11 N. Central Avenue  
Staunton, VA 24402



### **Culpeper Star-Exponent**

471 James Madison Highway  
Suite 201  
Culpeper, VA 22701  
[http://www.starexponent.com/cse/news/opinion/letters\\_to\\_the\\_editor\\_submit/](http://www.starexponent.com/cse/news/opinion/letters_to_the_editor_submit/)  
[rhumphreys@starexponent.com](mailto:rhumphreys@starexponent.com)

### **Times Community Papers**

<http://www.timescommunity.com/>

### **Fredericksburg Free Lance Star**

The Free Lance-Star  
616 Amelia St.  
Fredericksburg, Va. 22401  
[letters@freelancestar.com](mailto:letters@freelancestar.com)

### **The Central Virginian**

89 Rescue Lane  
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### **Orange County Review**

Orangenews.com  
110 Berry Hill Rd  
Orange, VA  
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### **The News & Advance**

101 Wyndale Drive  
Lynchburg, VA 24501  
Newsadvance.com  
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### **The Progress-Index**

15 Franklin Street  
Petersburg, Va. 23803  
<http://www.progress-index.com/lettertoeditor@progress-index.com>

### **Bedford Bulletin**

402 East Main Street  
Bedford, VA 24523  
<http://www.bedfordbulletin.com>  
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### **Hopewell News**

P.O. Box 481  
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### **The Gazette Virginian**

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### **Independent Messenger**

111 Baker St.  
P.O. Box 786  
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### **Tidewater News**

1000 Armory Drive  
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<http://www.tidewaternews.com/submitletter/>

### **The Virginian-Pilot**

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### **Suffolk News Herald**

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