



## Press Release

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### Isle of Wight County Votes to Oppose ODEC Coal Power Plant

County is latest to cite health and economic concerns as reasons to oppose

On Thursday, the Isle of Wight County Board of Supervisors adopted an official statement of opposition to what would be the largest coal-fired power plant in Virginia. The county would be downwind of the 1,500-megawatt coal plant proposed by Old Dominion Electric Cooperative in Surry County.

Isle of Wight joins Virginia Beach, Williamsburg, the town of Surry and Congressman Bobby Scott in officially stating concern for the health of the people and economy of Hampton Roads in light of the proposed coal plant.

In its statement, the board focuses on the potential health effects of pollution from the coal plant, which include risk of birth defects in unborn children from mercury contamination and increased respiratory problems from the ground level ozone (smog) caused by the plant's emissions. Ozone is the primary cause of "Code Orange" and "Code Red" air days in Hampton Roads during which even healthy adults are at risk of lung damage and children and the elderly are especially at risk. Another major concern is that businesses may have a hard time expanding, or may choose not to locate in an area with increased ozone, which is strictly regulated by the federal government.

Isle of Wight is the latest in a growing number of municipalities and organizations opposed to the coal-fired power plant due to concerns about how it will affect the regions' health, economy, agriculture and environment during an expected 60-year life span. In addition to the communities listed above, health groups such as the Norfolk-based Consortium for Child and Infant Health, the Virginia Asthma Coalition and the American Lung Association have officially opposed the proposal. Others officially opposed include the Isle of Wight Citizens Association, the Carrollton Civic League, the James City County Citizens Coalition, The Coalition to Keep Surry Clean, the Cape Henry Audubon Society, as well as the Garden Club of Virginia and a host of conservation groups.

Isle of Wight is the immediate neighbor to Surry County, ODEC's preferred site for the proposed plant. In January 2010, Isle of Wight County made an official request of Surry County to require ODEC to fund an independent study of the economic ramifications from the increased air pollution for Hampton Roads. Despite strong opposition to the plant from local residents, the Surry County Board of Supervisors snubbed Isle of Wight, many of its own citizens, and the region, by granting local zoning approval without addressing these concerns.



The Wise Energy Coalition and its partners commended Isle of Wight County for taking a strong stance to protect the citizens, businesses and farms of the region.

“The Isle of Wight County Board of Supervisors did the math and decided that another dirty coal plant upwind of Hampton Roads, a region already suffering from poor air quality, is a deal that only a short-sighted Surry County Board of Supervisors could see as beneficial,” said Mike McCoy of Appalachian Voices.

“The residents of Isle of Wight are clamoring for clean, affordable renewable energy options. And with state reports documenting more than 3000 megawatts of wind power just waiting to be harvested off of Virginia’s shores, the message to ODEC is clear. Now is the time to retire this coal plant proposal and move forward with better, 21<sup>st</sup> century alternatives,” said Cale Jaffe, Senior Attorney at the Southern Environmental Law Center.

“We hope that other Hampton Roads communities will also consider opposing this project. If the plant is built, Hampton Roads may find it harder to attract new businesses, and existing businesses may find it harder to expand because of increasingly stronger controls for ozone pollution. That is a terrible burden for Surry County to put on the region during our current economic struggle,” said Bob Burnley, economic development specialist and former director of the Virginia DEQ.

ODEC is actively seeking approval for the coal plant from the Army Corps of Engineers and has recently conducted water intake tests for the plant in the James River with the Virginia Marine Resources Institute.

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