

FW Wise County Plant Comments .txt

From: ellenatkinson24@aol.com [mailto:ellenatkinson24@aol.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 14, 2008 5:19 PM
To: vchec
Subject: Wise County Plant Comments

Dear Ms. Berndt,

I am writing concerning the Prevention of Significant Deterioration and Maximum Achievable Control Technology permits for Dominion's proposed wise County power plant. I strongly urge the Board to deny the permits for the power plant since this conventional coal plant would be one of the largest emitters of hazardous air pollutants in the Commonwealth.

I request that a limit be placed on the carbon dioxide emissions of the wise County plant. A consensus has developed among scientists that carbon dioxide, emitted by the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, is the leading cause of global warming. Carbon dioxide emissions in Virginia rose a whopping 34% between 1990 and 2004, a rate nearly twice the national average, but the DEQ permit for this plant has no cap on carbon dioxide even though the estimated pollution from the plant will be at least 5.6 million tons per year. According to the Supreme Court (Mass v. EPA), the EPA (and by delegation the DEQ) has the authority to regulate carbon dioxide emissions. Governor Kaine has created a target of 30% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2025. Consistent with this target, DEQ should at least impose a minimal requirement of reductions in carbon dioxide from this facility.

I am also concerned about the amount of mercury which will be emitted by the wise County plant. The wise County coal plant would emit more than four times the amount of mercury per-megawatt compared to Dominion's own Clover station in Halifax County. It would emit almost fifty times the amount of mercury as Reliant Energy's coal plant in Seward, Pennsylvania --- a plant which also burns waste coal. This influx of mercury into our region will have environmental and health consequences since mercury is a known neurotoxin and since many of our waterways are already under mercury advisories.

I am concerned about the 34.09 tons of sulfur dioxide which the wise County plant will emit annually. Sulfur dioxide is the leading cause of acid rain and smog, which causes cardiovascular and respiratory health problems. The plant will be located approximately 15 miles from High Knob, a portion of the National Forest which is used by many in the community for recreation, hunting, and as the watershed which provides our drinking water. I am concerned about the impact acid rain and soot will have on this extremely biodiverse and unique mountain as well as on the world class Clinch River.

The wise County plant will emit 1,020 tons of particulate matter per year, which can cause asthma, cancer, and heart attacks. "Dirty Air, Dirty Power" (2004) estimates that 989 Virginia lives are cut short as a result of power plant pollution each year, and our local health district (Lenowisco) is tied for the dubious honor of having the highest asthma rates in the state. Wise County is already one of the poorest regions in the state of Virginia, and many of its inhabitants have limited access to healthcare, being forced to flock to a free medical clinic which sets up in our area one weekend each year. Please search your conscience and consider whether it is acceptable to build a second coal-fired power plant in this poverty-stricken region, adding to the health problems which are already disproportionately borne by women, children, minorities, and the poor.

Given the long lifespan of a new coal plant (fifty or more years), it is essential that regulators take a careful look at the pollution this conventional coal plant would emit. I appreciate you taking the time to give these permits the consideration they deserve. Again, I strongly urge you to deny the permits for the wise County power plant.

FW Wise County Plant Comments .txt

Sincerely,

Ellen Atkinson
300 W Ravine Rd
Kingsport, TN 37660