

Statement of Paula M. Marino to the United States
Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future
Atlanta, Georgia
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Good morning. My name is Paula M. Marino. I am vice president of Engineering for Southern Nuclear Operating Company, a subsidiary of Southern Company.

First, I will briefly describe my company. Southern Nuclear is the licensed operator of six units at three locations: the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant located approximately 30 miles south of Augusta; Hatch Nuclear Plant near Baxley, Georgia and the Farley Nuclear Plant near Dothan, Alabama. These six nuclear units comprise over 6000 megawatts of generating capacity and represent approximately 17 percent of the total annual generation of the Southern Company system. In addition to our operating facilities, Southern Nuclear is an applicant for a Combined License to construct and operate two new nuclear energy facilities at Plant Vogtle. The first new nuclear energy facilities to be built in more than 25 years.

On behalf of Southern Company and Georgia Power Company, allow me to welcome you to Georgia and to express our appreciation for the significant work undertaken by this Commission for a national nuclear used fuel management program. I will go over Southern Company's position on the recent Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations.

While the Blue Ribbon Commission does not take a position on Yucca Mountain, Southern Company believes that the Yucca Mountain program should continue to be developed and the existing standards for that site are appropriate and achievable. With respect to the Blue Ribbon

Commission's recommendations that the facility siting process be adaptive, staged, consent-based, and transparent and standards-and science-based, Southern Company supports all of these principles. The transparency and standards-and science-based nature of the process are especially critical.

Southern Company believes that any new initiative relative to repository siting should be part of an integrated strategy that includes the Blue Ribbon Commission's other recommendations regarding interim storage and reform of the radioactive waste disposal funding and management. While our company supports a process that uses the consent of a potential host locality for siting purposes, the consent of the locality, or lack thereof, should not override the technical suitability of the site or be used to avoid or nullify the United States' obligations under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act to develop a repository and take possession of stakeholders' used nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste.

Southern Company also supports the establishment of a federal corporation with responsibility for nuclear waste storage and disposal that would have access to the Nuclear Waste Fund without the necessity of appropriations. Safeguards must be taken to de-politicize the entity, including the implementation of mandatory standards that require the constitution of the board to be bipartisan and to include representatives of each interested stakeholder group, including representatives of the industry. We wish to underscore our belief, however, that merely shifting responsibility will be ineffectual unless the funding process is de-politicized and the new entity is provided with access to all nuclear waste funds to be expended as necessary to achieve the purposes of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act without subjecting the funds to the budgetary restrictions generally applicable to Congressional appropriations. Reliance on appropriations for

access to funding necessary to develop and implement the nuclear waste program threatens the viability of the program. All fees paid under the contracts authorized by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act should be made available to the radioactive waste program and should not be diverted to other uses. Southern Company agrees with the Blue Ribbon Commission that funds collected from utility ratepayers for disposal of nuclear waste should be available for that purpose without subjecting the funds to the budgetary restrictions generally applicable to Congressional appropriations.

Regardless of whether the Yucca Mountain licensing proceeds we believe that the technical knowledge developed about Yucca Mountain and long-term storage and disposal reflected in the Department of Energy's application for a repository construction authorization should be preserved. To allow for technological advancements in fuel recycling, shielding, storage and disposal technologies before the first casks become inaccessible, Southern Company believes that long-term centralized storage should be considered prior to commencing permanent disposal of spent fuel. Southern Company also believes that licensing reform to permit a storage-only license for a repository with limited, retrievable storage would also enhance the ability of the Federal Government to satisfy its obligations under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act. Southern Company also agrees with the Blue Ribbon Commission recommendation to create dedicated storage facilities as a way to begin to transfer used fuel to federal control pending its ultimate disposition.

Southern Company supports the Blue Ribbon Commission's efforts to remove impediments to the creation and operation of interim storage facilities, including for example, National

Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review and the co-location restrictions in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act that prohibit the siting of storage facilities and repositories in the same state. Licensing reform is necessary so as to permit a storage-only license for a repository with limited, retrievable storage.

Southern Company supports research, design and development to either improve upon existing technologies or to identify new technologies while advocating for the development of workforce needs and skills. Given the task of the Blue Ribbon Commission, Southern believes the focus of the Blue Ribbon Commission should remain primarily on recommendations relating to the storage and disposal of nuclear waste and designated areas of Research, Development & Demonstration.

Southern Company does not oppose the Blue Ribbon Commission's efforts to make US-based storage and disposal facilities available to the international community, provided that resources are not restricted to the industry located in the United States resulting from use of the storage and disposal facilities by the international community.

To the extent the siting process must be reopened and the development and construction of additional repositories are considered, Southern Company believes it is appropriate to develop new generic, site-independent standards prior to site selection.

Southern Company believes that it is appropriate for Nuclear Regulatory Commission to consult with Environmental Protection Agency in the formulation of standards and agrees with the Blue

Ribbon Commission that one entity should be designated as the lead agency for the development of safety standards. Jurisdiction over the promulgation of safety and performance standards should be consolidated at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

I appreciate the opportunity to share these thoughts with the Commission today. The United States' leadership in the nuclear industry depends on the adoption and implementation of a sound nuclear waste policy. Thank you.