



Contact: Tim Echols
Phone: 706-340-0773
www.psc.state.ga.us

Georgia Public Service Commission

244 Washington St S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
Phone: 404-656-4501
Toll free: 800-282-5813

For Immediate release

NEWS RELEASE

7-13

From the Office of Commissioner Tim Echols

Commissioner Tim Echols Reports on Study of German Energy Policies

ATLANTA, July 1, 2013 – Georgia Public Service Commissioner Tim Echols spent a week in Germany June 22nd to 29th as a guest of the German government. Echols said he was joined by five other officials from around the country to observe first-hand the energy transition the Germans call “Energiewende.”

“The German sweeping national energy policy has flipped traditional energy regulation on its head, and that brings with it many new challenges,” said Echols. “The German government has caused a gold rush of sorts by paying a guaranteed tariff for 20 years for anyone who wants to put up wind or solar. The recovery for that distributed generation appears on everyone’s bill as a surcharge, and it is more than the electricity itself.”

Echols said that the energy policy in both Georgia and Germany is shaped by their attitude towards nuclear power. “In Georgia, nuclear power is on the rise as we build two state-of-the-art reactors, and we celebrate this advanced technology with pride,” said Echols. “But in Germany, despite having some of the best engineers in the world, the people have turned against nuclear power and fossil fuel, and their options are now limited.”

Echols discovered that Germany, by its policies, has painted itself into a renewable corner. He said that they are paying a price for their green power—charging its rate-payers almost three times what we pay for electricity. “They really believe they are going to change the way the world generates electricity by using renewable energy as base-load power and conventional energy only when they absolutely have to have it,” said Echols. “What stunned me was their willingness to put their big utilities at risk by taking them out of the decision making model. It reminds me of the posture of the EPA towards coal-generating companies in our country,” said Echols.

Echols said that under our system in Georgia, the utility is tasked with creating and executing the energy plan—what we call an IRP, or Integrated Resource Plan. “The Public Service Commission staff and interveners like Walmart and Georgia Watch examine the plan, challenge certain aspects of it, and even bring their own expert witnesses to comment under oath,” said Echols. “Then the five elected commissioners get the last word—affirming or changing the plan according to what is best for the whole state of Georgia.”

For more information from a German perspective, contact the following people who Tim Echols had a chance to interact with in Germany:

German Energy Agency
Sandra Rostek
Deputy Head of Division Renewable Energies
Tel: +49 (0)30 72 61 65 - 654
rostek@dena.de
www.dena.de

Boris Schucht, Managing Director CEO, 50 Hertz
boris@schucht@50hertz.com

Andreas Jahn, Senior Associate, The Regulatory Assistance Project
ajahn@raponline.org

Viktor Elbling, Director General for Economic Affairs and Sustainable Development
4-D@diplo.de

Rainer Baake, Executive Director, Agora
Rainer.baake@agora-energiewende.de

Reinhard Schneider, CEO, Werner & Mertz
rschneider@werner-mertz.com

Commissioner Echols is in his third year on the Georgia Public Service Commission, having been elected statewide to a six-year term in November, 2010. His complete biography is at <http://tiny.cc/y5ktq>. The Commission web site is www.psc.state.ga.us.

###