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NEWS RELEASE

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FROM THE OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER LAUREN "BUBBA" MCDONALD

MCDONALD SAYS COMMISSION VOTE ON NEW NUCLEAR STUDY WILL HARM RATEPAYERS

ATLANTA, August 1, 2016 – Georgia Public Service Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald says Georgia Power ratepayers will be harmed as a result of the Commission's vote to approve Georgia Power Company's request to pass on and capitalize the costs of investigation and licensing costs for potential new nuclear units and to recover these costs from ratepayers. McDonald was the only Commissioner to vote against allowing Georgia Power to incur \$99 million in costs for site suitability and Combined Operating License (COL) application development work for a nuclear plant in Stewart County in southwest Georgia.

McDonald says his no vote was based on a number of reasons. He is concerned that this decision comes before the full cost is known of the construction of new two units now underway at Nuclear Plant Vogtle near Waynesboro, Georgia. McDonald said if the Company has decided that that studying the potential for a new nuclear site is worthwhile then the stockholders should be willing to assume the risk and the cost. "If this is such a good investment let their investors make the first investment. If they're that sure, they can make that investment and then if it does go through and if there is in 2030 a new nuclear program, that money goes in and be capitalized over the life of that unit. And so it's an investment." McDonald points out that under the Commission's majority decision if the Company eventually decides not to build a nuclear power plant on the site, the ratepayers will still pay for it.

McDonald also notes that there are two unresolved issues that further complicate locating a proposed nuclear plant in southwest Georgia. The first one is the withdrawal of water from the Chattahoochee River, an issue still under litigation with our neighboring states of Alabama and Florida. "I haven't heard anything on the study of water, taking more water out of the Chattahoochee River. We're still in a water fight between Florida and Alabama," McDonald said.

The second issue is the federal government's failure to establish a nuclear waste. "We sit here today and Georgia ratepayers have invested \$1.3 billion to build a nuclear waste site but the federal government has failed to live up to its promise to build one since 1989," said McDonald.

McDonald indicated during the June 30, 2016 Energy Committee that he would not support the future nuclear study, would propose a motion to separate the issue from the Georgia Power 2016 Integrated Resource Plan and then oppose allowing the Company to recover those costs until 2019.

Commissioner McDonald is in his third term on the Commission, having been appointed and elected in 1998, and re-elected in 2008 and 2014. His full biography can be found at <http://www.psc.state.ga.us/content.aspx?c=/commissioners/lauren-mcdonald-jr/?tab=2>.

The Georgia Public Service Commission is a five-member constitutional agency that exercises its authority and influence to ensure that consumers receive safe, reliable, and reasonably-priced telecommunications, electric and natural gas service from financially viable and technically competent companies. For more information on the Commission visit our web site at www.psc.state.ga.us .

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