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NEWS RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER TIM ECHOLS

Commissioner Tim Echols Calls for Continued Construction of Plant Vogtle Nuclear Units in Wall Street Journal Op-Ed

August 18, 2017 – Atlanta, Georgia – Commissioner Tim Echols, Vice-Chair of the Georgia Public Service Commission, in an opinion column in today’s edition of the Wall Street Journal, calls for the continued construction of the new nuclear power units now underway at Georgia Power’s Plant Vogtle near Waynesboro, Georgia. Commissioner Echols notes that the future of U.S. leadership in nuclear technology is at stake, as well as keeping our energy sources diversified. The partial text of the column is printed below.

Georgia Stands Alone **By Tim Echols**

“Georgia’s decision to continue building two new nuclear reactors—the only commercial ones now in development in the U.S.—means my state stands alone. Vermont’s Yankee nuclear plant went offline in 2014, and Massachusetts’ Pilgrim Station is scheduled to close in 2019. The company behind two half-finished reactors in South Carolina began publicly considering last month whether to abandon the project.

Georgia has been down this road before. The first two nuclear reactors at the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant near Augusta were completed in 1987 and 1989, in the aftermath of the 1979 Three Mile Island accident. What was supposed to be a \$1 billion project turned into \$8 billion to finish. Still, it was a great deal for ratepayers in the end, delivering low-cost power for decades.

Today, finishing the Vogtle plant’s two new Westinghouse AP1000 reactors is the right call—for their owners, including Southern Co., as well as for Georgia and the U.S. There are four reasons: Diversifying the energy supply makes sense, because no one knows what the future holds. The U.S. could institute a carbon tax, as President Obama envisioned, or even regulate frackers out of a job. No matter what happens, nuclear reactors will ensure Georgia’s electric rates stay competitive.”

Due to copyright restrictions, we are unable to reprint the full column. Please refer to the August 18, 2017 edition of the Wall Street Journal.

Echols was re-elected to his statewide post in 2016 and serves until 2022. His complete biography and photo are found on the Commission web site at

<http://www.psc.state.ga.us/content.aspx?c=/commissioners/tim-echols/?tab=2>

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BACKGROUND

Plant Vogtle is a nuclear power electric generating plant near Waynesboro, Georgia. When fully operational, Units Three and Four now under construction will produce 2,200 Megawatts of electricity, enough to power about 500,000 homes. Plant Vogtle Units One and Two have been in commercial operation since 1987 and 1989 respectively.

The Commission certified Georgia Power's share of the construction cost of Plant Vogtle Units Three and Four on March 17, 2009 at \$6.114 billion. Georgia Power owns 45.7 per cent of Plant Vogtle with its partners, Oglethorpe Power Corporation, Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia and the City of Dalton Utilities, who own the remaining 44.3 per cent.

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 electric, natural gas and telecommunications 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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