

BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

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ONE-THIRD OF A BILLION DOLLARS ALREADY SPENT ON DUKE NUKE

Today at a press conference in Asheville activists revealed that Duke Energy has requested approval of over \$300 million in preconstruction costs to the North Carolina Utilities Commission. In testimony today before the commission, activists presented the February 1 filing by the company for its Lee Nuclear Station in South Carolina as evidence.

In her sworn testimony to the commission, Laura Sorensen, spokesperson for SAFE Carolinas, said, "If we take a look at the cost overruns and construction delays at the new reactor installations in South Carolina, Florida and Georgia, it is obvious the Lee nuclear plant's estimated construction costs of \$24 billion will only increase through its ten or more years of construction time." Sorensen's figure included costs for licensing, preconstruction and site preparation. Noting that Duke has not received license approval and construction has not begun, she added, "Let's not forget ratepayers are liable for the cost even if the plant stops construction and never produces an ounce of electricity."

SAFE Carolinas also spoke about the negative health impacts. For example, they said that parents and children who survived the nuclear disaster in Fukushima live under

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a constant shadow of fear because 44% of the 96,000 children tested have thyroid cysts and nodules due to radiation exposure.

SAFE Carolinas' message to the NC Utilities Commission requested that they deny Duke Energy's request for more nuclear power. The group submitted findings about corporate welfare, waste and pollution, and asked that the Commission not ignore the many who took the time to travel from Asheville to Charlotte to speak.

SAFE Carolinas, a chapter of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, organized a caravan of activists opposing expensive and wasteful sources of electric power. Many of them testified today at the NC Utilities Commission public hearing on the 15-year statewide Integrated Resource Plan held in the Mecklenburg County Courthouse in Charlotte.

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