

The Stop Cliffside Coalition

NEWS RELEASE
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Stop Cliffside Coalition Begins Television Campaign

April 8, 2009--A broad state-wide and national coalition of health, faith, social justice, environmental and climate advocates are taking their battle to the mainstream airways. Starting April 7, a two-week television ad campaign has begun to air throughout the most populated area of the state, leading up to "Call to Conscience -Cliffside Climate Action" on April 20, in Charlotte, North Carolina.

"Call to Conscience" is a national demonstration of the rapidly building grassroots movement to stop the construction of new coal-burning power plants, including Duke Energy's massive 800 megawatt Cliffside Unit 6, in Rutherford County, about 50 miles upwind of Charlotte.

The television message comes a week after the release of a report that found completing the plant and the four nuclear facilities proposed in the Carolinas would cause the state's utility rates to jump 50-100 percent.

The Duke University economist, Professor Emeritus John Blackburn, who authored the report, also concluded that renewable energy was a far better deal for the state's consumers, both in terms of environmental impact and cost-savings. This week, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, stated that wind resources off the East Coast alone could replace most, if not all, need for coal-fired power plants in the United States.

Background

The Cliffside Power Plant is located in Rutherford County, NC. If completed, the expanded facility would use conventional, pulverized coal technology. It would have no ability to capture or control carbon, and estimates project its emissions will be approximately 6 million tons of carbon dioxide annually or 312 million tons over its expected 50 year life span—the equivalent to adding one million cars to the road each year.

The April 20th demonstration in Charlotte comes in the context of major government steps to regulate pollution from coal-fired power plants, the country's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions that are driving global warming. Nationwide, plans to build more than 90 coal plants have been halted in the past three years due to concerns about health impacts, climate change and financial uncertainties. Furthermore, this week U.S. House Democrats unveiled legislation that would require coal-fired plants to pay for the pollution they now dump into the air for free, underscoring growing skepticism of coal as a viable long-term energy solution.

Carolinas Clean Air Coalition, Rainforest Action Network, Greenpeace, North Carolina Waste Awareness and Reduction Network (NC WARN), the Canary Coalition, NC Interfaith Power & Light (a program of the NC Council of Churches), several River Keeper Associations, Mountain Voices Alliance and People Advocating Real Conservancy (PARC) are the main organizers of the event. The April 20th action is endorsed by the nation's top climatologist Dr. James Hansen, internationally acclaimed naturalist writer Bill McKibben, Friends of the Earth, actor Martin Sheen, and many other public figures and organizations.

The 30-second television ad first aired April 7th, on cable news networks throughout the 10 county region surrounding Charlotte. It can be viewed online at www.stopcliffside.org