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Testimony Regarding a New Coal Power Plant in Virginia (PUE-2007-00666)

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony today. I am privileged to participate in a public comment process before this Commission, which has ensured that Virginia has reliable and affordable energy for nearly a century. I also appreciate the testimony of current and former Commissioners during last year's General Assembly session, when you offered critical insights on the "re-regulation" proposed by Dominion.

As the International Panel on Climate Change has reported, today we face a global climate crisis, in which we have only a few years to halt the increase and begin the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. We must take aggressive action to reduce emissions, which are currently rising in Virginia.

State and local governments across the country have taken leadership roles, by identifying alternative energy sources, passing Renewable Portfolio Standards, adopting Cool Counties, Cool Cities, and other greenhouse gas reduction initiatives. I would like to thank Albemarle, Arlington, James City, and New Kent Counties for adopting the Cool Counties initiative which Fairfax and the Sierra Club created in partnership with jurisdictions across the country.

Unfortunately, with 5.4 million tons of annual carbon dioxide emissions, this proposed coal power plant would more than negate our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. For example, we have replaced 100 of our county vehicles with hybrids, reducing emissions by 185 tons annually, a minute fraction of the emissions that the coal plant would produce.

We are concerned that the coal plant might also increase pollution in Northern Virginia, a federal non-attainment area for particulate (PM 2.5) and ozone pollution (eight hour standard). Data on prevailing winds suggest that pollutants from the coal plant could drift over Northern Virginia within 72 hours of emission in eight out of twelve months of the year, posing an additional health risk to our community.

Perhaps before building another coal plant, Dominion should make investments in conservation, demand side management, and renewable energy. There are practical alternatives to exacerbating global warming and impairing the health of Fairfax County residents. For example, the Virginia Energy Plan identified 30,050 megawatts of economically recoverable wind energy in the mountains and off Virginia's coast. I respectfully request that we examine the alternative actions available to us before approving another high emissions coal plant.