



Works in Progress

"Conserving Coastal Georgia's Natural Heritage... Investing in Our Children's Future"

Spring – Summer 2009

Newsflash: Sustainability finally being recognized in Georgia!

Recently the Center's executive director sent the e-mail message below with the following article to a number of press people, elected officials, and colleagues. He did this in an attempt to persuade influential Georgians to take timely action that will provide a host of long-term benefits for both our environment and economy.

*Foolhardy and misleading opinions, often quoted in Georgia media, hold that prevailing economic concerns prevent us from taking the bold steps needed to improve our environment, including reduction in carbon emissions to control climate change. As this article makes clear, actually the opposite is true – **billions of dollars can be made and thousands of good jobs created by taking well-informed steps to support conservation, improved efficiency, and using alternative forms of energy.***

E-mail message sent to media people, elected officials, and professional colleagues April 30, 2009

I urge you to give serious consideration to the article below. The coastal region has especially great potential if leaders will rise to the occasion. Instead of resisting change, Georgians should be welcoming it and preparing a rapidly ramped-up strategy for capturing the greatest economic and environmental benefit as soon as possible.

The public sector (state & local) should be working collaboratively to cultivate emerging businesses based on energy efficiency, low-impact development (smart growth), and renewable energy generation. There's money to be made, jobs to be created, and quality of life to be enhanced with these initiatives.

If we don't do it here, other states will quickly pass Georgia by, and our window of opportunity will be lost.

Your feedback is appreciated. Please circulate this message among your colleagues.

David Kyler, Executive Director
Center for a Sustainable Coast

Program needed for sustainable commerce in state

By Peter A. Appel, T. Rick Irvin
For the Atlanta Journal-Constitution
Thursday, April 30, 2009

Cities and counties across Georgia are seeking new industries to bring new jobs into our state. Sustainable commerce — from renewable energy to low-carbon transportation to recyclable consumer products — is the fastest-growing sector of the global economy. Even in these difficult economic times, U.S. business and industry continue to invest billions of dollars each month to create new sustainable commerce products and services for the global marketplace.

Fortunately, Georgia's state and county governments have been early leaders laying the foundation for sustainable commerce industry — and jobs — in all corners of our state. The Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority and the Georgia Research Alliance have set up public-private partnerships that are creating new sustainable commerce industries — from energy to life sciences — which pump billions of dollars into the Georgia economy.

Local governments across our state also are innovating sustainable commerce programs with big payoffs. By capturing greenhouse gasses from an inactive landfill, Catoosa County in northwest Georgia has created tradeable carbon credits to finance its landfill management program and provide potential revenues that can fund other public works projects for years to come — while improving the environment.

Georgia businesses also have been early leaders in new sustainable commerce investments in the South. The Range Fuels plant under construction in Soperton will be the first U.S. commercial facility to manufacture ethanol biofuels from agricultural and forestry wastes — not food. Range Fuels is part of the more than \$2 billion of renewable energy-related projects that made Georgia an early leader in bio-energy. The new Suniva facility in Norcross makes Georgia first in the Southeast to have an operating solar cell manufacturer.

All across Georgia, a growing number of workers could be taking home a paycheck from sustainable commerce companies. With smart, targeted sustainable commerce investments, Georgia could reap tens of thousands of new blue- and white-collar jobs in each of the next two to four years. With unemployment more than 9 percent, ensuring Georgia makes those smart, targeted investments — and brings those thousands of ‘green jobs’ home — must be one of our highest priorities.

Without further action, however, Georgia’s sustainable commerce leadership in the South could be short-lived. Tennessee recently announced construction of not one but two new solar cell manufacturing plants representing more than \$2 billion in immediate new investment and more than 1,000 jobs just north of our border.

Now is the time for Georgia business, industry and government to aggressively recruit sustainable commerce companies from around the globe to build manufacturing plants and business centers in our state. How do we do that? The 2008 Entertainment Industry Investment Act made Georgia a top-five state in financial competitiveness for entertainment projects. We can certainly make even greater investments in sustainable commerce than we’ve made for movies and CDs.

Adding solar power to the mix of utilities Georgia cities and counties supply to homeowners and small businesses would create an immediate and huge market for solar panel technology in Georgia. This simple change creates the best incentive we could give solar power companies to choose Georgia when they build new manufacturing plants. Virginia and Arizona are making this change this year — so should we. We also can use the great network of Department of Labor Career Centers to identify and train unemployed Georgians in our technical college system for sustainable commerce jobs in the solar, wind, biofuels and green manufacturing industries.

Georgia can regain the clear lead in sustainable commerce in the South and become a regional power for the U.S. sustainable commerce industry. To make that happen, Georgia business, government, colleges and universities must come together — this year — and implement an aggressive strategic program supported by the same leadership, resources and focus that have served our state so well in years past.



The spring newsletter of the Initiative to Protect Jekyll Island is now available at www.savejekyllisland.org

Center prepares 2009 *State of Coast* Update

Highlights

This is the first update since the release of our State of Georgia’s Coast Report in 2004. Although the region’s general trends and conditions remain largely the same, the implications are more threatening because prior problems remain either unrecognized, unsolved, or made worse by regressive actions and complacency of state officials and many local governments.

1. Coastal Land Use, Development & Infrastructure

Until recently real estate speculation far outpaced the rate of actual population growth. In the past decade, the acreage of cleared and developed land has expanded at nearly double the pace that census figures would suggest. When credit was easy to get for development projects, and market prices for coastal lots rose mightily, many people invested in acquiring land and ‘flipping it’ for a quick profit. This resulted in many vacant lots and in some cases unused condos and marinas, accompanied by extensive soil erosion, contaminated coastal waters, and drainage sediments deposited in tidal marshes.

2. Water Quality & Environmental Protection

The major source of water pollution in coastal Georgia, non-point source pollution, remains largely uncontrolled. This pollution is caused primarily by contaminants being carried by stormwater from upland areas into surrounding waterways and wetlands. The problem is especially severe in the coastal region because of the flat topography, seasonally high water table, low elevation, and extensive interlacing of wetlands and waterways within the landscape.

3. Climate Change

Georgia is the only state on the eastern seaboard of the U.S. that does not have, nor is preparing, a state climate change action plan. Other states and the federal government are taking bold steps to adopt policies and practices that will either help control factors that are contributing to climate change or reduce damage likely to be caused by it. Many of these steps cost little and will help citizens, consumers, and tax payers in multiple ways, regardless of climate change.

4. Governance The accountability and transparency of decision making is essential to democratic institutions that are intended to serve the public interest. Authority given to elected and appointed officials must be held to standards that can be credibly verified by carefully examining the facts about who benefits, who pays, and the options available for responsibly meeting legitimate public needs. Unfortunately, the record does not sustain confidence that current decisions of public officials in Georgia are supported by objective use of science, a clear consensus on or understanding of public interest, and unbiased treatment of all citizens.

For more information about the report, call the Center at 912.638.3612 or go to www.sustainablecoast.org.

Setbacks continue to plague new nuclear reactor plans in Georgia

Judges rule utilities lack plan to manage radioactive nuclear waste

Savannah, Ga. (March 10) – The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's three-judge panel told Georgia utilities late last week that their application to build more nuclear reactors at Plant Vogtle was incomplete because it failed to consider how radioactive nuclear waste would be managed if a storage site remains unavailable when the new reactors begin operation. A long-term storage plan must be developed before the federal agency can issue a permit to build the proposed nuclear reactors. This ruling represents another small victory to prevent environmental damage from the proposed addition of two more reactors at Southern Company's Plant Vogtle along the Savannah River, near Augusta, Ga.

"Radioactive waste storage in Burke County puts our people's lives at risk. It's an injustice," said Rev. Charles Utley, pastor of a church in Waynesboro within view of Plant Vogtle and a community organizer for the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League.

"Utilities should instead build clean, safe and affordable energy solutions such as wind, solar, tidal and biopower that don't pose these risks," commented Sara Barczak, program director with Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, one of the intervening organizations in their Savannah field office.

By admitting the radioactive waste contention, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's licensing board agreed that the impacts of storing nuclear waste on-site at Plant Vogtle must be studied, as an off-site storage site may not be available when needed. This decision could help protect the public from excess radioactive waste storage and slows the utilities' new licensing effort, known as a combined construction and operating license (COL).

"Radioactive nuclear waste is already piling up right here in Georgia," said Bobbie Paul, executive director of Georgia WAND (Women's Action for New Directions). "Nuclear reactors continue to leave a horrible legacy for all future generations. It's totally irresponsible for the utilities to push a plan that will only make this situation worse."

The citizen groups Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, **Center for a Sustainable Coast**, Georgia WAND (formerly Atlanta WAND), Savannah Riverkeeper

and Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, filed a petition in November 2008 to intervene on behalf of their members with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). The Emory University School of Law's Turner Environmental Law Clinic, along with attorney Diane Curran of Washington, D.C., are representing the organizations.

The COL is being pursued by Georgia utilities to obtain federal approval to construct and build two new nuclear reactors at Plant Vogtle. Southern Company's nuclear division, Southern Nuclear Operating Company, filed for the permit with the NRC in March 2008 on behalf of Plant Vogtle's co-owners, Georgia Power (a subsidiary of the Southern Company), Oglethorpe Power, the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG Power) and Dalton Utilities.

A challenge by the same organizations to an earlier component of the licensing and permitting process, the early site permit, has been underway since 2006. That challenge is based on the failure of Southern Nuclear's license application to appropriately consider the effects of the two new reactors on the Savannah River basin. The NRC's licensing board will conduct a hearing on the contentions to the early site permit from March 16-19, 2009 in Augusta, Ga.

Download the original November 2008 petition filed by the intervening organizations on the COL and the NRC's licensing board ruling on March 5, 2009, accepting the radioactive waste contention in the combined construction and operating license permitting process at <http://www.cleanenergy.org/index.php?/Testimony.html>.

For more information on the NRC's Vogtle combined construction and operating license permit application process, visit <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/col/vogtle.html>.

For more information on the NRC's Vogtle early site permit application process, visit <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/esp/vogtle.html>

Studies show that electricity produced from wind costs at least 60% less than the same amount of power from a nuclear plant. Moreover, nuclear energy imposes huge burdens on U.S. taxpayers, including the cost of subsidizing liability insurance. On the basis of cost alone, nuclear power is a loser. We cannot afford expanding its use when cheaper, cleaner options are available.

Climate Change Support Sent to Congressional Leaders

We recently joined our colleagues in sending the following message to the majority leaders in the U.S. House and Senate.

May 20, 2009

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Speaker Pelosi:

As a coalition of residents, business owners, scholars, students and advocates in the Southeast coastal region, we are writing to express our support for strong and prudent legislation to address climate and energy issues facing our nation.

We are concerned about the consequences that changes in our climate will cause to our small-businesses, the environment, and our quality of life along the Southeast coastline. Our nation has an unprecedented opportunity to address the root causes of climate change and the impacts to our communities while protecting the health and productivity of Southeastern coastal economies now and for future generations. We urge you to work with your colleagues, our Congressional Representatives from the Southeast, to enact comprehensive climate legislation that includes a cap on global warming pollution with targets based on science, research and planning.

The Southeast coastline is one of the most vulnerable ecosystems in the United States to the threats of climate change. Sea levels are projected to rise at least 3 feet by the end of this century. While this statistic might be challenging to visualize, the slope of the land in the Southeast is such that a 1-foot rise in sea level can flood land a half of a mile inland. Even with less than a foot of sea level rise, many civic services such as sewer and water and gas lines would be in danger, not to mention homes, schools, churches and businesses. The projection of stronger storms and associated surges coupled with rising seas spells disaster for our low-lying communities. We have no time to delay.

Leading scientists warn that we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25-40 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. We can meet the first goal with existing technology, but we will need new policies and innovative solutions to meet long-term goals. It is up to Congress to establish science-based targets that cap our nation's global warming pollution and create market incentives needed to drive a new green economy.

We cannot overlook the economic and environmental imperative of addressing climate change. Our region has much to gain by taking advantage of new economic opportunities as we transition to a low-carbon economy. From our abundant and untapped resources such as energy efficiency and renewable energy options like solar and offshore wind energy, the Southeast coastal region will be a valuable source of clean energy solutions, innovation and jobs. With an average of 10% unemployment in our region – it would be a disservice to our citizens not to unleash legislation that can retool our workforce and reinvigorate our slumping economies. Additionally, any bill passed by Congress should rebate the great majority of the cap proceeds to American citizens in a way that is fair, progressive and can help rebuild communities.

Please do not delay in taking action to address one of our nation's greatest challenges. We look forward to working with you to develop and implement effective solutions to climate change.

Sincerely,

Toni Reale
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
Charleston, South Carolina

David Kyler
Center for a Sustainable Coast
Saint Simons Island, Georgia

Renewable Energy Report Issued for the Southeast

February 2009

A report released by the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy demonstrates that the Southeast has sufficient renewable energy resources to fulfill an aggressive national mandate for renewable energy.

"Yes We Can: Southern Solutions for a National Renewable Energy Standard" confirms that utilities across eleven Southeastern states can tap homegrown clean energy resources to meet a significant percentage of electric power demands. The analysis indicates near-term renewable energy resources can generate more than 15 percent of electricity demand by 2015 and achieve the proposed renewable energy standard (RES) of 25 percent by 2025.

To view a full copy of the report, go to:

http://www.cleanenergy.org/images/files/SERenewable_s02091.pdf

Take Action

The Southern Alliance for Clean Energy (SACE), Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) and other allies are looking for organizations, companies and individuals in the Southeastern United States that support a national Renewable Electricity Standard (RES). The United States Congress will consider an RES this year. This provision can help the Southeast:

- Reduce the billions of dollars spent every year importing fuels from other states and countries by developing local renewable energy resources;
- Support national and local economic development in the Southeast;
- Create thousands of manufacturing jobs and increase global export opportunities; and
- Reduce global warming pollution levels.

For more information, please contact:

Toni Reale
Southeast Coastal Organizer
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy



Working for a clean energy future

Center celebrates work, bestows honors

In December 2008 a group of environmentally concerned coastal Georgians gathered at St. William's Catholic Church on St. Simons Island to celebrate the Center's 11th year of operation and to hear their guest speaker, Senator Jeff Chapman (3rd district, Georgia General Assembly), present remarks about the region's challenges.

In his remarks Senator Chapman praised the Center for its important work in making the public aware of

the issues affecting the coast, why they are important, and what should be done about them. He said he shares the Center's concern about the lack of accountability in state government and is working to remedy the problem.

Conversation between the podium and the audience was lively, spontaneous, and diverse – clearly demonstrating an encouraging degree of interest in, and awareness about, coastal environmental issues.

Steve Willis, the Center's board president, presented the first annual Nick Williams Award to David & Mindy Egan, the champions of Jekyll Island State Park, who have been so effective as agents of change through their non-profit organization, the Initiative to Protect Jekyll Island.

The Egans were truly appreciative of the Center's recognition of their efforts. After receiving a standing ovation, both David & Mindy made comments from the podium. They reflected on their love for the island and how it led them, gradually at first, into becoming the voice for thousands of visitors who seek to ensure that Jekyll's tranquility and natural beauty are retained.

In presenting the award, Board President Willis quoted from a framed certificate honoring the Egans:

"The board and staff of the Center for a Sustainable Coast are proud to present the first annual Nick Williams Coastal Sustainability Award to David & Mindy Egan for their insightful commitment to protecting and promoting the public interest in stewardship of natural resources, preserving public access, and ensuring responsible use of Jekyll Island State Park.

"We also recognize the importance of their role in creating and sustaining the Initiative to Protect Jekyll Island, an influential and broadly supported non-profit organization representing the public interest in issues related to the conservation, preservation, and management of the Jekyll Island State Park.

"In keeping with the Center's mission and the principles of sustainability, we honor the recipients in the memory of Nick Williams, former board president and respected coastal Georgia conservationist."



Center President Steve Willis presents the Center's 2008 Nick Williams Award to Mindy & David Egan, co-founders of the *Initiative to Protect Jekyll Island*

About the Nick Williams Award

Nick Williams was the Center's board president when he passed away in February of 2008. In the late 1960s and early seventies, Nick played a leading role in stopping the City of Savannah from polluting the Vernon River through successful legal action. In recent years, he resumed his commitment to water quality through work on the Vernon River Committee. To protect wildlife habitats and the natural landscape, Nick and his wife, Suzie, put their Vernon River homesite as well as their Highlands, North Carolina property into conservation easements, and encouraged others to follow their example.

In recognition of Nick's service to the Center and his respected environmental convictions, we created an award program in his honor. Starting last year and in the years ahead, an annual Nick Williams Coastal Georgia Sustainability Award gives credit to deserving individuals and groups for their valued efforts to conserve and sustain the treasured natural resources that are so essential to our quality of life in coastal Georgia.

Center bestows honors, *continued*

In closing, Steve Willis made general comments about the Center's work and why it should be supported, reminding the crowd that the Center remains the only non-profit organization that's focused solely on Georgia's coastal issues related to the region's growth, responsible public policy, and environmental quality.

Further, he noted that the Center is uniquely collaborative in working with other groups while also being appropriately comprehensive in its approach to environmental issues that are so closely tied to the region's economy and quality of life. He urged all those present to renew their support if they had previously donated and to become contributors if they had not.

Is Georgia Power (aka "Southern Company") Blocking Renewable Energy in Georgia?

While the Georgia government fiddles with ineffectual renewable strategies such as biomass (burning our forests), and cellulosic ethanol (a completely unproven technology advocated by the powerful pine tree lobby), and remains chained to the outrageously expensive Vogtle nuclear white elephant, (as instructed by the super-powerful Southern Company lobby), our neighbors in Tennessee and Florida are positioning themselves to dominate renewable energy production in our region for decades. Florida's assembly is likely to soon pass a bill which will require that 20% of the state's electricity be produced from renewables by 2020, and Tennessee is moving forward to immediately spend \$2 billion (while creating 1,000 new jobs), to produce solar voltaic panels. Georgia, it should be noted, has more solar potential than Tennessee, and about the same as Florida, the current regional solar energy leader. Is it any surprise that ex-governor Roy Barnes has noted that he has never in his life seen such blatant special interests domination of the Georgia government as now?

We Georgians are riding for a fall. Southern Company's strategy of focusing on cheap coal ("cheap" if you don't count the damage to our health, atmosphere and planet), is about to make our energy inefficient, air-conditioning dependent culture one of the most expensive in the world. Carbon capping (which will make the big polluters – and their customers pay big time), and Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS – which will require that a certain percentage of all energy used in Georgia be generated from renewable sources) are coming our way soon.

Far from taking decisive action to clean up their act, Southern Company is continuing to falsely claim that Georgia has no significant wind or solar potential. Stan Wise, head of the Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC), and alleged regulator of Southern Company in Georgia, is traveling the country trying to derail the inevitable implementation of carbon capping and RPS requirements. Stan keeps promoting the Southern Company line that the Southeast has insufficient solar and wind resources, sounding more like a shill and lobbyist-in-chief for Southern

About the Center's Annual Meeting

Late every year the Center hosts an annual meeting following the election of its officers for the upcoming calendar year. These events are held to help raise public awareness about important coastal issues and to celebrate what has been achieved over the past year.

Early in 2008 the Center suffered the tragic loss of its board president, Nick Williams (see the shaded box on the previous page). To honor Mr. Williams and his conservation efforts, the Center established the Nick Williams Coastal Sustainability Award.

Last year's award marked the beginning of a new tradition, making the Nick Williams Award ceremony an important part of our annual meeting program.

Company than the utility regulator he is supposed to be.

Why is Southern Company so being so hard headed? The last time Southern Company implemented a big nuclear facility, Vogtle, they enjoyed a soaring cost overrun from an initial estimate of \$600 million to over \$8 billion! Astoundingly, they were granted an 11% PROFIT PLUS COST on this astronomical overrun! Right now the Vogtle expansion is estimated to cost \$14 billion, but most insiders think that it will exceed \$20 billion to build, and probably much more. Southern Company has a huge incentive to estimate low, and spend high, reaping guaranteed profits every step of the way. Who is going to stop them? Stan Wise? The Georgia Legislature?

Southern Company knows it must move fast to get the citizens of Georgia committed to sixty years of paying off the enormous Vogtle costs. Why the hurry? According to Southern Company's most recent annual report: If technological advances "reduce the cost of alternative methods of producing power" to a competitive level, the market share of Southern Co. and its subsidiaries "could be eroded, and the value of their respective electric generating facilities could be reduced."

Offshore wind is a proven, viable, cost effective means of generating all the additional energy Georgia needs in the next few decades. Despite Southern Company's completely unfounded and unsupported assertion to the contrary, there is plenty of sun here. If the people and government of Georgia started taking our environmental challenges as seriously as the rest of the world already does, Southern Company's wildly profitable nuclear dreams would evaporate just like the 40 million gallons of water a day their proposed nuclear reactors would suck out of the Savannah River.

Contact your representatives and tell them to stop whining and start acting to make Georgia a leader in renewable energy, not a laggard.

Steve Willis, President
Center for a Sustainable Coast
and Chairman, Coastal Group Sierra Club

Georgia PSC goes rogue

May 6, 2009 by Scott Henry

There must be something in the ventilation system over at the Public Service Commission that's making those folks more than usually loopy. Yesterday, the PSC voted 3-2 to elect Commissioner Stan Wise as board chairman for a two-year term. There's just one problem with this maneuver: It's illegal as hell.

And it's not as if PSC members can claim to be unaware of the law that mandates how chairmen are selected, because they tried to get the law changed during the recent General Assembly. That attempt failed; it appears this is their back-up plan.

Since 1992, Georgia law has called for the PSC chairmanship to rotate on an annual basis. Legislation sponsored by Rep. Don Parsons, R-Marietta, (but reportedly written by newly elected Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald) would have allowed the board to elect its own chairman for a three-year term. The bill passed the House, but stalled in the Senate.

As reported by the increasingly invaluable [Atlanta Unfiltered](#), current PSC Chairman Doug Everett announced Monday that he was resigning from that post as of July 1. He then made a motion nominating Wise as chairman for the next two years, with McDonald to serve as vice-chairman. The motion passed 3-2, with members Chuck Eaton and Bobby Baker voting against it. Eaton has written a letter asking Attorney General Thurbert Baker to weigh in on the matter.

But you don't need to be an attorney to know the vote violates state law, which states that "each such chairman shall serve for a one-year term of office as chairman."

Rep. Mike Jacobs, R-DeKalb, who *is* an attorney, admits he's perplexed by the board's actions.

"How an elected official can look at a statute that clearly lays out how a chairman is selected, and then do something else, is beyond me," says

Jacobs, who voted against Parson's bill to change the statute.

What's the point of all this? Well, it's widely believed that some members of the PSC want to change the rules to deny the chairmanship to Bobby Baker, who is the most consumer-friendly member of the Commission. But, again, *why*?

We don't like to promote conspiracy theories, but at this point, this one makes as much sense as any other explanation, so here goes: Under the current rotation schedule, Baker would become PSC chairman in 2011, the same year that Georgia Power has been authorized to begin [raising residential utility rates](#) to pay for two new nuclear reactors. Could it be that someone at Georgia Power has reason to suspect that the increase will exceed the estimated \$1.30/month and therefore wants a friendly chairman on the PSC?

Green energy gets state aid

Grants for solar, wind power: Overlooked bill uses stimulus funds to pay for up to 35 percent of project's cost.

By [Margaret Newkirk](#)
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
Thursday, April 16, 2009

In a legislative session dominated by fights over big-ticket items such as nuclear funding, lawmakers' efforts for other kinds of power didn't get much attention.

But lawmakers in fact gave a big boost to solar and wind energy projects before heading back to their districts.

They put a big pile of money on the table for both kinds of power, and made that money relatively easy to get.

House Bill 473 built upon a tax credit incentive created during the last legislative session.

The new measure lets stimulus money be used for grants to solar and wind projects, instead of after-the-fact tax credits.

The grants could pay for up to 35 percent of a project's cost, although the total dollar amount is subject to caps of \$100,000 to \$500,000 depending on the technology.

Federal grants are also available for up to 30 percent of a project's costs, making the total subsidy 65 percent of the cost.

Put another way, a business wanting to install solar panels on its roof, or on top of a parking garage, would have to pay only 35 percent of the cost out of pocket.

Walter Brown, chairman of the Georgia Solar Energy Association, said the new law will make it easier to tap into state assistance than the tax credits did.

The benefit of the credits, for instance, varied with the size of the applicant's tax obligation.

The new bill also fits the goals of the federal stimulus effort, Brown said.

"If you want to spend the money quickly and you want to do it on clean energy, *this* is the way to do it," he said.

Note: The Center views this new law very favorably. We hope to see it quickly translated into long overdue conversion to using clean, renewable sources of energy that help protect coastal water & air.

Center director supports Senator Chapman's Jekyll position in a letter to *The Brunswick News*

To the Editor:

The News seems determined in refusing to recognize the valid justifications for Senator Chapman's opposition to the agreement between the Jekyll Island Authority and Linger Longer Communities. Such treatment of a public official is inappropriate for a publication that aims to serve the community as a reputable source of news.

Contrary to the assertions made in your recent editorial ("Senator's latest actions are questionable,"), there is nothing retaliatory or underhanded in the Senator's motives. Mr. Chapman has been quite candid about his efforts to protect the public against exploitation threatened by a sweet deal for **Linger Longer Communities**, which will produce huge profits for them in developing Jekyll but share very little of that windfall with the public.

Like others defending the public interest, I am concerned that at least **\$50 million** in state bonds will be used to help a private developer make profits **in excess** of 200% on public land, **while the JIA—who's providing Linger Longer with acres of oceanfront land for a time-share project without requiring the developer to pay a land-lease fee—receives a mere 1% of Linger Longer's \$160 million in gross sales.**

The truth is that Chapman supports legitimate, financially responsible revitalization of Jekyll, despite claims made in *The News*. However, the Senator *does* oppose a contract that gives away beachfront public land to a politically-connected developer for a penny on the dollar.

Anyone who follows the money will support Chapman, not condemn him. Financial accountability is more important now than ever before.

David Kyler, Executive Director
Center for a Sustainable Coast
Published on April 15, 2009



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