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## **LETTER: We can work together to protect ourselves from GRP**

Nov 21, 2019

Dear Editor: I have something important to say to every one living in Madison County and the surrounding area.

If we all work together we can bring about needed changes in the way the Georgia Renewable Power (GRP) plant operates. These changes are necessary to protect the quality of all our lives. One person asking for change is easy to ignore. In fact, if even twenty people ask for change it's easy to ignore. If we could increase these numbers to 100, 200 or 500, we would have a voice that could not be ignored. Once heard, our collective voice could bring about changes at GRP.

Here is why change is needed. Through a campaign of misinformation and distorted facts, the GRP plant was built under a smoke screen that left the public out of the loop about GRP's real intentions. In 2017, GRP told local leaders the facilities would have no emissions other than steam and that no treated wood would be burned. We were told they'd only be burning things like the cut off two by fours from home construction, that they will only be releasing water vapor that will disperse within 300 feet of the plant. My personal favorite is that they have no plans to use the railroad track spur that ends at the plant. GRP has gone from the "promised" clean biomass-burning electricity-producing facility to an industrial size hazardous materials incinerator. I think generating electricity was just a cover that now allows GRP to dispose of toxic railroad ties as "fuel." Who knows what fuel they'll be burning next.

In 2013, the EPA determined that railroad ties were too dangerous to the environment to burn in boilers. The process was banned. Under pressure from lobbyists for the wood industry, this ban was changed in 2016. The change allowed ties to be burned if the boilers being used had the right equipment installed. These changes went into effect in 2018. GRP immediately applied for and received a change to their original operating permit. This change allowed them to start burning railroad ties as a fuel. Seems they had already installed the right kind of boiler when they designed the plant. Just a coincidence? The railroad ties are now arriving at the plant by train in rapid succession. Just last week I saw

29 train cars full of railroad ties being delivered to the plant and the next day, 15 more. Many more are sitting at the rail yard in Athens waiting to be delivered to the GRP plant? How convenient the railroad track spur that they had no plan to use, turned out to be. Just another coincidence?

The GRP smoke screen of producing clean energy is clearing. Now we have real smoke. I know this because I can see it every day. It is not water vapor. It's a mixture of toxic chemicals that is polluting our air and may eventually pollute our ground and water too. We must not accept this as just another coincidence. These are just a few of the many issues that we need to address with GRP. We will all be adversely affected if GRP is allowed to continue its current operations. With your help, change can happen.

A meeting for the public to learn more about health risks associated with the GRP plant has been set up by your fellow concerned neighbors. The meeting will be held Dec. 5, 2019 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Madison County High School cafeteria. A question-and-answer session will follow the presentation. Information on what you can do will be available. Please plan to attend.

We are calling our group the Clean Power Coalition. You can read about the group and the dangers at GRP on our Facebook page, Madison Clean Power Coalition. Become part of the effort to get GRP to produce clean energy and stop poisoning us. Just because GRP can burn hazardous materials doesn't mean they should or that

we should let them.

Sincerely,

Drago Tesanovich

Clean Power Coalition

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