

SENATE OF VIRGINIA

GHAZALA F. HASHMI
15TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT
PART OF CHESTERFIELD COUNTY, AND
PART OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND

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RICHMOND, VA 23218



COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
EDUCATION AND HEALTH, CHAIR
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
FINANCE AND APPROPRIATIONS
TRANSPORTATION
RULES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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General Assembly Members of the Central Virginia Region Release Statement in Opposition to the Proposed Gas-Fired Power Plant in Chesterfield County

After reviewing materials and information provided by Dominion Energy, environmental organizations, and other energy providers, General Assembly members of the Central Virginia region express opposition to Dominion Energy's plans to construct a gas-fired power plant in Chesterfield County. With respect, we acknowledge that numerous local officials (Chesterfield County's planning department, the planning commission, and the elected County Board of Supervisors) hold authority for reviewing and deciding on the company's conditional use permit. We also acknowledge that the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the State Corporation Commission (SCC) will review necessary permitting applications. However, as members of the General Assembly, our concerns focus on the impact this proposed plant has on statewide efforts to reduce fossil fuel usage, lower carbon emissions, enforce the Commonwealth's policy on environmental justice, and pursue renewable energy sources and technologies.

This proposed construction runs counter to the measures the Commonwealth has taken recently to lower carbon emissions and to diversify energy production and storage. In 2020, the Virginia General Assembly passed the Virginia Clean Economy Act (VCEA). This legislation requires Dominion Energy to deliver electricity from 100% renewable sources by 2045. Over the next several years, the VCEA mandates the following four actions in order to move Virginia to 100% carbon-free electricity with zero utility emissions:

1. Fully decarbonizing Virginia's electricity grid and shuttering the most polluting plants by 2045

2. Establishing aggressive efficiency standards for electricity use in the state while protecting low-income households
3. Incentivizing a broad expansion of rooftop solar generation across the state, and
4. Kickstarting a massive offshore wind industry with firm ratepayer protections.

Dominion Energy's current pursuit of permits to build a new gas-fired power plant in Chesterfield County undermines the state's transition to clean and renewable energy. Dominion supplies electricity to nearly 80% of the state; the utility must, therefore, take a prominent leadership role in the transition to clean, affordable, and reliable energy for the millions of Virginians it serves.

In May 2023, Dominion submitted an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) to the State Corporation Commission that highlights potential plans that would actually *increase* carbon emissions from the 21.8 million metric tons emitted in 2021 to between 36 to 43.8 million metric tons by 2048 (see [2023 Dominion Energy IRP](#), page 80, and [Executive Summary](#), page 4).

Dominion Energy's IRP highlights proposed plans for several new gas-fired power plants, including the construction of this 1000-megawatt, gas-fired power plant in Chesterfield County, details about which Dominion announced this summer. The plant is expected to generate significant air pollution in the [surrounding community](#) which includes an elementary school and a disproportionate number of low-income households and households of color. Through the Virginia Environmental Justice Act (2020), the Commonwealth established that environmental justice, with its focus on environmental justice and frontline communities, *is the policy of the Commonwealth*. We have a fundamental responsibility to ensure that environmental justice is a key criteria of any permitting decisions.

Further, the costs associated with this project are likely disproportionate to its proposed usage. Dominion Energy has argued that the “[Chesterfield Energy Reliability Center] CERC [Simple Cycle Combustion Turbines] SCCTs are being designed with a capacity factor of approximately 37% and have limited the annual average hours of normal operation to 3,240 hours per year per SCCT” (see [DEQ Air Permit Application](#), page 5-34, para. 2). At the same time, the costs of project development and implementation are anticipated to be well over the \$600 million price tag that Dominion previously shared in the 2019 iteration of this project. Dominion has yet to disclose the full anticipated costs of the project despite having already applied for two permits. These costs would be passed on to the ratepayers all across the Commonwealth. With the VCEA stipulation that most polluting plants be shut down by 2045, the construction of a new and costly power plant makes little fiscal sense.

We have heard from numerous constituents and are concerned about the objections raised by a variety of stakeholders, including leading environmental organizations, environmental justice

groups, and the business community focused on renewable energy technologies. For these reasons, we add our voices in opposition to the proposed new plant.

As current state legislators who support the Virginia Clean Economy Act as the law of Virginia and who are concerned with impacts of climate change and air pollution on the health, economy, and well-being of our Commonwealth, we are compelled to be on record in opposition to a new gas-fired plant in Chesterfield County, and we encourage Dominion to lead the way forward to a true clean energy transition.

Signatories



Senator Ghazala Hashmi
Senate District 15



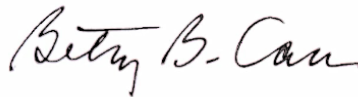
Senator Lamont Bagby
Senate District 14



Senator Lashrecse Aird
Senate District 13



Delegate Delores McQuinn
House District 81



Delegate Betsy Carr
House District 75



Delegate Rodney Willett
House District 58



Delegate Rae Cousins
House District 79



Delegate Michael Jones
House District 77



Delegate Debra Gardner
House District 76