



MEDIA RELEASE

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Georgia Watch names Sen. Tommie Williams Legislator of the Year *Legislator commended for consumer advocacy in 2009*

ATLANTA – Senate Majority Leader Tommie Williams (R-Lyons) was named “Legislator of the Year” today by Georgia Watch for battling the interests of big business and speaking up for the average Georgian. Sen. Williams worked closely with Georgia Watch to assure pro-consumer provisions were implemented into Senate Bill 31, the financing plan from Georgia Power that will raise monthly power bills for residential customers to expand Plant Vogtle, a nuclear power plant near Augusta.

SB 31, which was signed into law by Governor Perdue earlier this year, forces ratepayers to foot Georgia Power’s bill for the expansion at Vogtle while excluding many big businesses. In 2011, ratepayers will see an increase of \$1.30 per monthly power bill, a cost that will ratchet up each year to around ten dollars in 2017. These increases will occur years before the reactors produce a kilowatt of energy. Furthermore, Georgia Power shareholders stand to make a billion dollar profit from the financing scheme.

“Senator Williams authored a key amendment to Senate Bill 31, which ensures that Georgia Power’s income received from early financing of nuclear plants is properly accounted for,” **Georgia Watch Deputy Director Danny Orrock said.** “This takes away an incentive for Georgia Power to over-earn on prepayments for Plant Vogtle and future nuclear construction.”

Sen. Williams’s amendment requires Georgia Power to record costs associated with Vogtle’s expansion in the company’s overall accounting. The utility intended to have the accounting for the two new reactors set apart from their overall company accounting, which is regulated to keep profits within a specified range. In the original language of SB 31, Georgia Power could have kept excessive profit from the financing and construction at Vogtle, with the Sen.’s provision they must balance it with their overall company revenue.

“With the passing of SB 31, Georgia Power was written a blank check that will come out of the pockets of rate-payers,” **Georgia Watch Executive Director Angela Speir Phelps said.** “The only silver lining of that very dark cloud is Sen. Williams’s pro-consumer provision – we commend him for standing up for the average Georgian.”

Sen. Williams is the chairman of the Senate Committee on Assignments and the vice chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. He also sits on the Senate Administrative Affairs Committee, the Senate Appropriations Committee, the Senate Reapportionment and Redistricting Committee, the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee and the Senate Rules Committee.

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Founded in 2002, Georgia Watch is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501-(c)(3) watchdog group focusing on consumer education and research in the areas of health care, insurance, identity theft, consumer energy issues and personal finance. Visit www.GeorgiaWatch.org for more information.