

UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS DIRTY DOZEN REPORTS

2015 Withlacoochee and Floridan Aquifer: Battle over Sabal Trail Pipeline Leads to Precedent Setting Court Decision

Though the Sabal Trail natural gas pipeline was built through southwest Georgia, crossing multiple rivers and sitting atop the Floridan aquifer, the Federal District Court in Washington, D.C. in August ruled that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) illegally allowed the construction of the pipeline. That precedent setting ruling has already been used in other courts to stop pipeline projects elsewhere. Whether or not the courts will allow gas to continue to flow through the Sabal Trail pipeline is uncertain, but the high profile battle has led, in part, to the introduction of legislation in Congress that would reform how FERC reviews and approves pipeline projects. H.R. 2649 would force FERC to compare the cost and need for the pipeline against opportunities for meeting those needs through alternative energy sources like wind and solar, require more thorough environmental impact studies and provide private landowners with more power to appeal FERC decisions.

2016 Northwest Georgia's Drinking Water: State Fracking Laws Close to Passage

When oil and natural gas wildcatters began soliciting northwest Georgia property owners about purchasing the mineral rights to their land, those residents—concerned about the prospects of natural gas drilling and fracking—contacted their legislators. Their legislators responded by introducing and passing legislation earlier this year that would safeguard well water and surface water in the event that fracking occurs in Georgia. While HB 205 passed both chambers, an amendment unrelated to the issue sank the measure when the House and Senate versions of the bill could not be reconciled. However, the bill's sponsor, Chairman John Meadows (R-Calhoun) expects the two chambers to adopt the measure early in the 2018 session.

2016 Chattahoochee River: Nuclear Proposal Dies

After getting the go ahead to conduct a \$99 million feasibility study for constructing a nuclear power plant on the Chattahoochee River in Stewart County, Georgia Power Company in March suspended further exploration of the project. In a letter to the Georgia Public Service Commission, the company said demand projections showed that embarking on the study would be premature. The company continues to be dogged by cost overruns on its Vogtle nuclear reactors highlighted in this year's Dirty Dozen report.

2016 Georgia's Well Water: Effort to Dump Coal Ash At Wayne County Landfill Stopped

Faced with mounting opposition from the citizen group No Ash At All and other Wayne County residents, Republic Services in April announced that it would temporarily halt efforts to build a rail spur to its Broadhurst Landfill to accept up to 10,000 tons of coal ash daily. The rail spur would have required filling some 25 acres of wetlands while the toxic coal ash threatened drinking water sources for area residents. Republic Services has offered to permanently refuse to accept ash at its Wayne County facility in exchange for higher dumping rates for local residents. The local Municipal Solid Waste Management Authority has rejected that proposal, but negotiations continue.