

Georgia Power's new gas proposal at Plant McIntosh: Dirty, expensive, and unnecessary

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The proposed new methane gas-burning unit could be the most expensive of its kind in the country, and would be an unnecessary addition to one of the dirtiest power plant sites in Georgia.

This would make a dirty site even dirtier.

Plant McIntosh is already a major historic polluter. An expansion would only make the situation worse.

- Plant McIntosh is a former coal plant that began operations in 1979. Today it burns methane gas and oil, generating up to 2,100 megawatts of electricity, with two “baseload” units and eight “peaker” plant units that fire up when the grid most needs it.
- The existing baseload plant is the 4th most greenhouse gas-polluting power plant in the state.



Photo by Savannah Morning News.

Georgia Power customers can't afford it.

The financial burden of this addition—“Unit 12”—would fall on customers for excess power that we don't need.

- In recent Public Service Commission's proceedings, one expert witness testified that this is the highest cost she has seen for a plant of this type in the U.S.
- Unit 12 ranked last (25th out of 25 proposed projects) in the PSC staff's economic evaluation.

No party in the case agreed with Georgia Power's assertion that it needs all 25 projects.

- Georgia Power's own testimony admits it doesn't need the exact number of megawatts the McIntosh expansion would provide (757 MW).
- Before striking a disappointing settlement, PSC staff recommended rejecting the plant.

What is Georgia Power is asking for? The answer depends on which state agency it's asking:

- As part of a massive request for 10 gigawatts of power, Georgia Power asked **the PSC** for **ONE** combined-cycle unit (Unit 12), which the PSC approved on December 19.
- On November 4, Georgia Power applied for an air permit from **the Environmental Protection Division** for **TWO** combined-cycle units. EPD is anticipated to issue draft permits in the coming months.

Importantly, Georgia Power cannot build any additional units without PSC approval. But Georgia Power's preemptive permit application suggests it plans for more gas at McIntosh.

What's next? Opportunities to weigh in:

At the Public Service Commission:

- SELC, on behalf of Georgia Interfaith Power & Light and Southface, and the Sierra Club on behalf of itself and the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, filed a **motion for reconsideration** of the PSC's recent 10 GW approval. The motion is likely to be heard in February or March, with an **opportunity for public comment**.

At the Environmental Protection Division:

- SELC will evaluate the draft permit as soon as it is published and plans to circulate a **comment letter for sign-on**. Additionally, EPD is likely to schedule a **public hearing**.