

Governor Perdue continues in her quest to take control of the Yadkin Project

October 18, 2009

The NC Legislature resoundingly rejected the concept of a State take-over of the Yadkin Project in a 66-39 vote on August 6, 2009. After extensive hearings in both the NC House and Senate, the final decision by the Legislature has determined the State of North Carolina should not take-over the Yadkin Project; and should not attempt to acquire the Federal License for this Project.

It is remarkable the Governor and her Secretary of Commerce do not feel they should abide by the vote on the North Carolina Legislature. Governor Perdue and Secretary Chriscoe, assisted by the Attorney General's office, filed a 533 page document with the Federal Energy Commission in late September, asking FERC to set aside Alcoa's application for a new license and to recommend to the US Congress that legislation should be enacted that would transfer the Yadkin project to the State of North Carolina.

In the Governor's motion to FERC, she does not explain how she expects to fund the acquisition of the Project without the Legislature's approval. She makes an argument that control of the State's water should be in the hands of the State, not with a private corporation. Deep within the 500+ pages, it seems the State believes the water for consumptive use by large population centers should take priority over hydroelectric production. To the HRLA, it sounds like the State wants to prepare a way for Interbasin Transfer of water without having to deal with those of us who prefer the Yadkin waters remain in our watershed.

Supporting documents offered by the State include a statement by David H. Moreau, PhD. Moreau offers arguments that waters of the Yadkin River Basin now used for hydroelectric power generation may be far more valuable to the State for satisfying "the rapid growth of urban water demand". He claims the value of water for electrical production is worth between 23 to 35 cents per million gallons; while water for residential consumption in Greensboro would cost a customer \$2,720.00 per million gallons. He notes a ten foot (10 ft.) drawdown of High Rock Lake would yield 800 million gallons per day for urban purposes.

The High Rock Lake Association has a long history of fighting any sort of proposal that removes water from our watershed, whether it's an Interbasin transfer plan or a proposal to build huge cooling towers for a nuclear station. As the State's motion points out, urban areas will undoubtedly require more water in the future. It is our position that growth within a particular watershed must be balanced with available water supplies within the watershed, and that transferring water out of the watershed is a perilous, unnatural, and unpredictable course of action.

Beyond the Governors planning for robbing water from our watershed, we have not been able to discover other basis, or motives, for her initiatives. Financial models we have looked at do not justify her actions. She has been unwilling to publically discuss her quest to control the Yadkin Project. Even though the NC House spoke loudly on August 6, 2009, there is a powerful undercurrent in Raleigh that is intent on gaining control of our Lake. Stay alert.