Georgians for Affordable Energy
Fighting for Fair Utility Rates and a Clean Energy Future

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OpenAI's $20 Billion Georgia Data Center Raises Alarms Over Corporate Welfare, Climate Change, and Government Collusion

July 24, 2026

ATLANTA – Georgians for Affordable Energy today demanded complete transparency before any further state or utility commitments are made to OpenAI's proposed $20 billion Project Camellia in Effingham County, warning that the project exposes three ongoing failures of Georgia's energy policy: higher electric bills for Georgians, more fossil fuel generation despite cheaper clean energy, and billion dollar deals negotiated in secret between government officials, Georgia Power, and Big Tech.

"Earlier this year State legislators refused to pass Senate Bill 34 to protect Georgians from data center cost-shifting. Four months later we are expected to believe utility customers are protected simply because Southern Company CEO Chris Womack signed a pledge in D.C.?" said Patty Durand, founder of Georgians for Affordable Energy. “That is ridiculous.”

Consumers Are Already Paying

OpenAI has pledged that Georgia families will not subsidize Project Camellia. Yet testimony presented during Georgia Public Service Commission hearings in May showed that Georgia Power is collecting gas pipeline costs associated with serving data centers through residential and small business base rates.

Georgia Power has also delayed the retirement of coal generating units in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi to meet rapidly growing demand from data centers. Those costs are paid by utility customers and not data centers that are causing them.

Massive Fossil Fuel Expansion

Project Camellia would rely on 3.2 gigawatts of new combined cycle natural gas generation, spending $20 billion to lock Georgia into decades of expanded fossil fuel infrastructure and increased CO2 emissions that will accelerate climate change.

"Instead of taking advantage of Georgia's placement as a top ten state for solar intensity, Georgia Power is choosing infrastructure that increases their profits instead of using solar and bringing business to Georgia’s clean energy manufacturing sector to take advantage of the sun. That is because five Southern Company affiliates earn bigger profit when Georgia Power uses gas to generate electricity,” Durand continued. “And state leaders allow it.”

Governor Brian Kemp acknowledged in his 2025 State of the State address that increasingly destructive storms are costing Georgia billions of dollars but offered no solution.

A Pattern of Secrecy

News reports for Project Camellia describe weeks of secret negotiations among state and county officials and project representatives before the project became public.

At the same time, participants in next Tuesday's Georgia Public Service Commission technical workshop on real time pricing, the type of tariff data centers are on, must sign nondisclosure agreements that effectively silences public discussion.

During PSC hearings in May, Georgia Power's Manager of Pricing Lee Mays testified that revenues from data centers collected elsewhere would more than offset residential customer cost shifting he admitted was taking place at that proceeding. That cost shifting was approved but the PSC opened a new proceeding to examine company evidence.

"Before that process has even begun, participants are required to sign nondisclosure agreements that silences participants," Durand said. "The Georgia Public Service Commission already allows Georgia Power far more secrecy and trade secret claims than nearly any utility commission in America. A state-granted monopoly utility should be transparent in its operations."

Georgia clean energy manufacturing sector ignored

Georgians for Affordable Energy is calling on Governor Brian Kemp, Georgia Power, and the Georgia Public Service Commission to stop subsidizing data centers at public expense, end the secrecy, and use Georgia's natural solar energy to benefit Georgia clean tech sector businesses.

"Georgia has a robust clean energy manufacturing sector. State leaders claim that Georgia is the number one state to do business, yet allows Georgia Power to import gas and expensive gas infrastructure when QCells in Dalton could provide solar panels and NeoVolta Power in Pendergrass could provide battery energy storage."

"Why are state leaders giving data centers billions in tax breaks, meeting with data center executives in secret, refusing to pass legislation to control data centers, and sidelining Georgia's clean energy manufacturing sector?" Durand continued. "It's because Georgia Power wants data centers to come here and has outsized influence. That needs to end."

Patty Durand
Founder, Georgians for Affordable Energy
patty@georgiansforaffordableenergy.org
678-467-0148