



Fast Facts

Over 10,000 megawatts of wind power potential exists off the coast of Georgia and over 4,000 megawatts in North Georgia.

According to a 2003 University of Georgia study, Georgia has enough biomass to potentially meet 12% of the state's energy needs.

In 2006, less than 5% of electricity was generated from renewable energy sources, mostly hydropower and wood/waste, according to the Energy Information Administration.

For More Information:
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Advance Renewable Energy

What's at Stake?

Georgia has a wealth of homegrown, renewable energy resources, yet historically Georgia has relied heavily on coal and nuclear energy, which can harm our economy, health, security, water resources, and the environment.

Neither coal nor nuclear power plants come without a heavy price tag. Georgia's two proposed coal plants and two nuclear reactors are all estimated to cost billions of dollars, which will increase the rates paid by utility customers.

Challenges

Despite notable financial and health risks, utilities across Georgia are attempting to build new coal and nuclear power plants to the detriment of Georgia's ratepayers and the environment. In order for Georgia's utilities to move away from these traditional dirty power sources, state and federal policies and incentives need to be enacted so that solar, wind and biopower can be easily incorporated into utilities' overall energy mix.

Next Steps

Investing in renewable energy will help diversify Georgia's energy supplies, reduce our reliance on fossil fuels from volatile regions of the world, help stabilize electricity prices, create jobs, and reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other harmful air pollutants.

According to Georgia's state wind map, developed in 2005 by AWS Truewind, the lead wind-mapping specialist in the nation, there are over 10,000 megawatts of **wind power** potential off the coast of Georgia and over 4,000 megawatts of wind potential in North Georgia (<http://www.gawwg.org>).

Additionally, the Southeast has the greatest growth potential for **biopower**. In 2008, we saw significant proposals by electric utilities and others to build new biopower plants, to convert coal-fired plants to burn biomass, or to upgrade coal-fired plants to burn small percentages of biomass in a process called co-firing. This is because biopower technology is well developed, can be implemented relatively quickly, and can be easily integrated into current operations.

Solar energy also offers an opportunity for Georgia's utilities and small businesses. Throughout the United States, including the Southeast, utilities are beginning to develop large-scale solar projects. In 2008, the state's first solar cell manufacturing plant, Suniva, opened in Gwinnett County and plans to create 100 jobs by the end of 2009.

- Require utilities to provide their customers with information about the electricity they are supplying, such as the utility's fuel mix percentages and emissions statistics.
- Expand incentives for renewable energy, such as the Clean Energy Tax Credit passed in the 2008 General Assembly.
- Support statewide certification courses for residential and commercial solar and wind installers.
- Support the conversion of existing coal plants, such as Georgia Power's plans to convert Plant Mitchell near Albany to 100% biomass, to utilize Georgia biomass to produce electricity – provided sustainability criteria are in place.
- Support the development of a statewide Climate Action Plan.