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## OPINION LETTERS

### Development must be held accountable

As Georgia leaders continue aggressively promoting economic development, the public must be protected from consequences that often harm household finances, quality-of-life, and health. Yet these problems remain unacknowledged and unevaluated by dogmatic decision-makers fixated on advancing negligent industrialization.

State leaders must provide the safeguards Georgians deserve by adopting public policies that resolve the following:

- **Hidden Subsidies** – Incentives offered to major businesses often shift private development costs onto Georgians. For instance, after recent fee increases approved by Georgia’s Public Service Commission [PSC], residential utility rates are at least 50% higher than those paid by industries. That means unwary households are subsidizing development, unfairly rewarding investors with higher profits. Such subsidies must be prohibited unless explicitly approved by voter referendum.
- **Contradictory Goals** – Despite Georgia now preparing a climate emissions reduction plan, the PSC is considering approval of Georgia Power’s proposal for new natural-gas plants, worse than burning coal if methane leaks aren’t prevented, and using coal plants long after pledging to retire them. Influential corporations with clean-energy agendas doing business in Georgia – including Walmart, Microsoft, Target, and Home Depot – must compel the PSC to rapidly transition from fossil-fuels to low-emission energy and incentivize roof-top solar installations.
- **Environmental Impacts** – Clearing vast tracts of land and paving them for development creates stormwater runoff that can cause contamination and flooding that are imposed on local taxpayers and property-owners, while also endangering marshlands, wildlife, and fisheries. Furthermore, large-scale solar projects should be installed on warehouse roofs instead of clearing forests or converting agricultural land for them.

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