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Governor Timothy Kaine

Office of the Governor
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
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Richmond, Virginia 23219

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Dear Governor,

I attended the Round Table meeting that you held in Ashburn, Virginia on Monday March 31 2008. I found your presentation very informative. It was the first time that I had heard you speak in person; I was favorably impressed with your intelligence and ability to communicate. I voted for you based on your integrity and your positions on many issues, and for the most part I am very satisfied with the initiatives you've taken and your performance in this office.

The one issue in which I have been repeatedly disappointed in your position and voting record has been the one of Virginia's energy/environment.

I share the concerns voiced by many in the room that night that Virginia is not following energy policy that is wise for ourselves or our children. By listening to your responses in defense of your support for the coal plant and lack of support for significant investing in renewables infrastructure, I began to understand your perspective.

It is presumptuous of me, a citizen with little direct professional experience in energy policy, to point out what is wrong with your policy, but I feel compelled to do so in the interest of future Virginians, our children. It is precisely the fact that I am NOT in politics, and have not been lobbied and educated by BIG COAL that I can see that your advisors have steeped you in the message of coal. If your Energy director has led you to believe that it is wise, affordable or practical to continue to invest in coal, it is obvious to me that you are being advised by the wrong guy. Virginia's government is still being cradled by the proponents of fossil fuels, shielded from the copious evidence of the promise of investment in renewables, and in the fiscal and environmental rewards of conservation initiatives like green building and demand-side management.

How can you educate yourself on this "copious evidence" I refer to? Please give some time and attention to the many citizens and public interest groups (CCAN, Sierra Club, etc) who are only too glad to provide alternate ways to invest Virginians' energy money in a direction AWAY from coal, instead of towards cleaner coal. You'll be amazed, once you listen to them, how much misinformation you've been given from good old boys that don't have the imagination or courage to let go of the old ways. I've been told that Virginia politics is a place where change comes slow. The reality of our environmental predicament (peak oil, global warming), however, is a crisis requiring revolutionary moves, not the baby steps the establishment espouses.

A report came out last fall that ranked Virginia as last in the country for investing in energy efficiency and conservation. The average Virginian uses twice as much energy per capita as the average Californian. So why is Virginia building a new coal plant when we have so much room to improve in conserving energy?

In a state where Dominion Power Company has so much control over government decisions through their institutional influence in representatives and state staff, it will take significant resolve and resourcefulness--leadership--to lead the Commonwealth away from coal and fossil fuels dependence.

We look to you, our elected leaders, to set the stage so that Dominion will fail to prosper unless it invests rapidly in renewables and moves away from coal as quickly as possible. We look to you to be that courageous leader, and look forward to your bold initiatives in behalf of us and our progeny.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely yours,

Gina Faber