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Footnotes Issue #98: May 8th, 2015

## Palmetto Pipeline Meets Opposition

At [public hearings held on April 21 and May 7](#), over 500 Sierra Club activists, Riverkeepers, and concerned community members came together to oppose the Palmetto Pipeline. The largest energy infrastructure company in North America, Kinder Morgan, wants to build a 360-mile fuel pipeline from Belton, South Carolina to Jacksonville, Florida. They have applied to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) for a Certificate of Public Convenience & Necessity, which if approved by GDOT Board Members, would grant the company the power of eminent domain. However, with [opposition from the Governor & Lieutenant Governor](#), local residents and officials, Savannah businesses, and environmentalists, it is clear that this wildly unpopular line is not needed in Georgia.



**Take Action!**

Although [the exact location of the pipeline has yet to be revealed](#) by the company, the proposed Palmetto Pipeline project will cross the watersheds of five major rivers and freshwater coastal wetlands, and could contaminate drinking water, wells and water resources in the event of an accident. Kinder Morgan's safety record of 180 spills since 2003 foreshadows a high likelihood of fuel spills in Georgia. Further, since over 58% of the proposed pipeline will pass through 12 Georgia counties, Georgia will be taking on 100% of the economic and environmental risk in exchange for only 15% of the products being transported through this pipeline--and 61% of the gasoline is destined for Jacksonville, FL.

Kinder Morgan [states that the pipeline will bring an additional 1.05 million gallons of gasoline](#) to the Savannah market, which currently consumes 840,000 gallons a day, all trucked in from existing pipeline terminals in North Augusta and Macon and shipped in via two ocean terminals on the Savannah River. The company has promised only 28 permanent full-time administrative positions in Atlanta, meanwhile, as many as 200 permanent jobs currently held by truckers, port workers and U.S. Merchant Mariners would be put at risk. Additionally, Kinder Morgan refuses to divulge how much of the fuel will be exported. Exporting gasoline benefits private not public interests.

It does not serve the public interest to expand fossil fuel infrastructure at a time when fuel consumption is decreasing, a trend that needs to continue if we are to avoid the worst effects of climate change. It is clear that Kinder Morgan has failed to demonstrate that this proposed pipeline serves a public purpose, and if GDOT fails to make a decision within 90 days of the application, the power of eminent domain will be automatically granted.

**The deadline for the GDOT to grant Kinder Morgan subsidiary Palmetto Products Pipe Line LLC the "right" to condemn private property along more than 200 miles of coastal Georgia is May 19, or less than two weeks from now. [Please submit a comment to your Georgia DOT Board Member asking them to stop this project from moving forward!](#)**

## MARTA Expansion on the horizon in Gwinnett County?

A majority of likely voters in Gwinnett County support a 1 percent sales tax to fund the expansion of MARTA into a county that now operates an independent bus system, Gwinnett County Transit. [The Gwinnett Chamber recently released results from a poll](#) that revealed



63 percent of voters were in favor of expanding MARTA into Gwinnett, and 50 percent would pay a penny sales tax for service. Although Gwinnett County voters have [rejected MARTA multiple times at the polls](#), the issue has resurfaced at a time when Gwinnett's demographics are changing rapidly, companies like NCR are relocating to areas with better walkability & connectivity, and satisfaction with Gwinnett County Transit is at a low. Despite these trends, [Gwinnett Chairman Charlotte Nash believes it is not the time](#) to bring the

question to the public, citing a need to look at transportation & mobility comprehensively, and a lack of political will among voters. However, many [residents are asking county leaders to start county-wide conversations](#) to build consensus around all modes of transportation, including transit. **Chairman Nash will be holding a town hall meeting to hear from residents on on Tuesday, May 12, at the Hudgens Center for the Arts at Gwinnett Center in the Duluth area. [Click here to find out more.](#)**

## Sierra Club Meetings

**Wildlands & Wildlife Committee Meeting**, Monday, May 18, 7:00 p.m.  
William Tomlin, [wmltom@gmail.com](mailto:wmltom@gmail.com)

**RAIL Committee Meeting**, Monday, May 26, 7:00 p.m.  
Brionté McCorkle, [brionte.mccorkle@sierraclub.org](mailto:brionte.mccorkle@sierraclub.org)

**Smart Energy Committee Meeting**, Monday, June 1, 7:00 p.m.  
Cecilia Harris, [ceciliaharris@gmail.com](mailto:ceciliaharris@gmail.com)

**Don't live in Atlanta? Check out our [Local Groups](#).**

## Other Events

**May 12th - Georgia Water Coalition Spring Partner Meeting** - Join us for the Annual GWC SpringPartner meeting on May 12, 2015. We will be discussing the future of the Georgia Water Coalition, Buffers on GA state waters, groundwater protection, 2015 legislative debrief, pipelines in GA, and more. We will honor our champion Senators and Representatives during lunch. Lunch is free but will be provided for registrants only, so please make sure you register in advance! [Click here to register.](#)



**May 14th - Sierra Club 101** - You joined the Sierra Club to help protect the environment -- now what? Come learn about the Sierra Club and how to get involved in our local efforts. Open to members and non-members alike--bring a friend! Please [register here](#) so we can bring enough refreshments for everyone.

**May 16th - 2015 John Muir Outing: Love the Coosa Paddle** - Join us for a 10-mile float on the Coosa River as it winds through western Floyd County on its way to Weiss Lake in Alabama. The journey will also take in two significant industrial sites: International Paper's pulp mill and Georgia Power Co.'s Plant Hammond, a coal-fired power plant. An estimated 30,000-60,000 fish each year may perish at this power plant's water intake and the warm-water discharge from the plant further disrupts fish habitat downstream. Representatives from the Sierra Club and Upper Coosa Riverkeeper will help participants understand how these problems can be corrected and how individual citizens can take action to protect the Coosa. [Click here to register.](#)



**May 20th - Sierra Club & Beer** - Every other month, Sierra Club and Beer provides a space and great beer from Marietta-based Red Hare Brewing Company for meeting like-minded people, while learning something new. There is even team trivia to make the night more interesting! Be sure to stick around through the end, when we give out door prizes. Please consider biking and PLEASE RSVP so we are sure to bring enough brew for everyone! [Click here to register.](#)

**SAVE THE DATE! October 23 to 25th - 2015**

**Georgia Chapter Retreat** - The Georgia Chapter's bi-annual gathering will take place At Crooked River State Park in St. Mary's, GA. Join us and experience a weekend of fun, adventure and learning with your fellow Sierra Club volunteers and leaders from all over Georgia. We will go on hikes, paddle down the river and take a trip to Cumberland Island! There will also be an opportunity to participate in workshops about the Sierra Club, our history, and the issues we work on. On Saturday evening, we will host an awards banquet to recognize our volunteer leaders. [Click here to register.](#)



**Looking for more? Check out our [Meetup Group](#) for even more events!**



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