

Alachua County Chapter

Florida League of Conservation Voters

Comments Presented at the City Commission Meeting  
Gainesville, Florida February 2, 2006  
By Francine Robinson

Board of Directors, Florida League of Conservation Voters

2/2/06  
# 050879  
Francine  
Robinson

This past Monday evening, I addressed the downsides of three of the four options as prof-  
fered by ICF in its current report:

**Option 1. THE COAL-FIRED PLANT:** Not only would the proposed coal plant place our community in long-term debt, it would contribute to degradation of the ambient air, increasing adverse health impacts on our human and other living populations.

**Option 2. INTEGRATED COAL GASIFICATION:** Unanticipated problems of a new and minimally-demonstrated technology overlay the additional problems of higher start-up costs and greater risks for GRU.

**Option 3. NATURAL GAS:** This fuel is subject to volatile pricing and may well prove to be an ongoing drain on our economy.

**Option 4. CONSERVATION AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY:** Aggressive conservation education of the public can reduce energy demand significantly along with the implementation of alternative energy sources such as solar, a proven technology, among others.

Why Option 4?

1. The costs of Option 4 would be dramatically lower compared to the other choices.
2. We would not burden our children and theirs with long-term debt.
3. Solar and other alternative energy technologies would not add to local, national or global pollution.
4. GRU and our community could initiate these projects now, without the delays of complex and costly construction.
5. The Option 4 projects could be expanded incrementally as future energy demands become clearer.
6. We would not be locked into the premise of a fixed amount of future energy needs.
7. We could obtain cheaper energy through decentralization and low-cost technology.
8. Some years ago the American Institute of Architects published a study indicating that conservation alone could reduce our nation's energy demand by 50%. We could well reach that goal here.

As a democratic community, we need as much time as it takes to gather all the information that we can in making this momentous decision. We need to remember, as well, that Option 4 does not preclude the choice of other options in the future, if they are found to be essential.