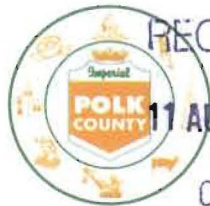


James P. Freeman
County Manager

William D. Beasley, P.E.
Deputy County Manager

Lea Ann Thomas
Assistant County Manager



Board of County Commissioners

RECEIVED-FPSC

11 AUG 17 AM 9:13

COMMISSION
CLERK

330 West Church Street
Post Office Box 9005
Drawer CA01
Bartow, FL 33831

Telephone: (863) 534-6444
Fax: (863) 534-7069

7:22
CENTER

August 11, 2011

State of Florida
Public Service Commission
Attention: Ms. Ann Cole
Commission Clerk
Office of Commission Clerk
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida, 32399-0850

RE: Docket No. 110090-EQ – Petition for approval of negotiated power purchase agreement with U.S. EcoGen Polk, LLC by Progress Energy Florida, Inc.

Dear Mr. Chairman and fellow Commissioners:

It has come to my attention that the Power Purchase Agreement entered into between Progress Energy Florida, Inc. and U.S. EcoGen Polk, LLC, with plans to build a 60 MW biomass electrical generating facility in Polk County, Florida, is currently under review by your commission.

As County Manager, I would like to express my strong support for U.S. EcoGen Polk, LLC's Polk County project for the following reasons:

- 1) The proposed power plant will result in approximately 350 construction jobs lasting up to two years, most of which would come from local workers, beginning immediately after construction finance in mid-2012. This will provide badly needed jobs in Polk County which has unemployment levels well above the national and state average;
- 2) Once the plant enters into operations in early 2014, it is forecast to provide approximately 35 full-time plant positions for a minimum of 30 years, with average compensation in the range of \$50,000 annually. In addition, it is forecast to provide 50-60 full and part-time positions for a minimum of 30 years in biomass fuel production and transportation with average compensation in the range of \$40,000 annually. Canker and continuing "greening" of the citrus groves, and the reduction of phosphorous mining in the area, Polk County, like many counties in Florida, is in need of economic development to replace lost jobs, and put increasingly idle agricultural lands to good use. In short, U.S. EcoGen Polk, LLC's Polk County project represents home grown, home made power production located in precisely the type of area that needs it the most;
- 3) A recent study conducted by the Central Florida Development Council concluded that the full positive economic impact of this project on Polk County and surrounding regions is likely to be in the range of \$11 million annually over the full term of the Power Purchase

Equal Opportunity Employer

05825 AUG 17 =

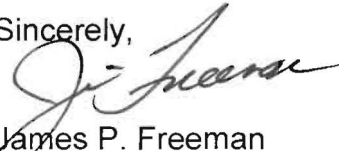
FPSC-COMMISSION CLERK

Purchase Agreement. This project is estimated to double the ad valorem tax base for the City of Fort Meade, allowing the city to create new jobs and improve aging city services;

- 4) Biomass is a renewable power resource that will reduce dependence on imported energy and hydro-carbon based fuels such as natural gas and coal that may contribute to global climate change;
- 5) U.S. EcoGen Polk, LLC's plans for producing power will require much less water than conventional forms of power generation, and its plans for biomass fuel production will have significantly lower water demand than most competing uses of the land resources;
- 6) Plans are underway between U.S. EcoGen and Polk State College to create a career based educational training program, allowing people from the county to develop the skills required to work at the plant and enter into a career path with U.S. EcoGen with a long-term future.

It is our hope that the U.S. EcoGen Polk County Generating Facility can move forward with the greatest speed. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (863) 534-6664 or contact me by email at JimFreeman@polk-county.net.

Sincerely,



James P. Freeman
County Manager