

Coal plant fires up more debate

It was a full house Thursday night and a lot more debate over Santee Cooper's proposed coal-fired power plant in lower Florence County.

By [Graeme Moore](#)

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Around 300 people showed up to Hannah-Pamplico High School's gymnasium for the public hearing held by the Department of Health and Environmental Control. Of those, more than 80 signed up to speak. Each person was given three minutes to comment on the proposal.

Before Santee Cooper can move forward, DHEC must issue what's generally referred to as an "air" permit. The regulatory body has already issued a draft permit, but must grant a final version before construction could begin.

And as the case has been, DHEC continues to hear resistance on the proposal.

"South Carolina is not a third-world country. We think we ought to have clean air, and we believe we ought to have clean water, and this proposal is not going in that direction," said Ben Gregg, executive director of the SC Wildlife Federation.

But Santee Cooper answers concerns like that by saying its facility would be one of the cleanest in the world. It promises state-of-the-art technology that would reduce potentially hazardous pollutants.

But that's not the only hurdle Santee Cooper must cross. It will also have to gain permission from the Army Corps of Engineers which is conducting an Environmental Impact Study. Some say that could take years to finish.

If you didn't get a chance to comment at Thursday night's meeting, you still have a chance. You can do so by writing DHEC. You can learn more by clicking on the link below.

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