



# MOBILE BAY NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

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July 8, 2019

Baldwin County Commission  
22251 Palmer Street  
Robertsdale, Alabama 36567

Dear Chairman Gruber, Commissioner Underwood, Commissioner Davis, and Commissioner Ball,

I am writing on behalf of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program to request funding in support of the production of a short film to highlight the varying perspectives related to the fate of the 600-acre Barry Steam Plant coal ash pond.

The story will be told through the lens of different voices interested in the long-term health and sustainability of the Mobile River and Mobile-Tensaw Delta: the industry (Alabama Power); the regulators (EPA, ADEM); the environmental activist community; and community members with a vested interest in the long-term health of the Delta.

The purpose of this film is to promote the wise stewardship of the water quality and living resources of Alabama's estuaries and coast. The goals include providing a scientifically accurate synopsis of the realities associated with the legacy environmental problem of coal ash ponds; providing a realistic assessment of each alternative associated with addressing the issue of coal ash pond closures and their impacts on the environment; accounting for the known inherent negatives and unintended consequences of each alternative; and preventing scientifically unbalanced information in the current media environment from creating public consensus that could restrict future environmental best practices and discourage beneficial public/private partnerships in our current, shifting, regulatory environment.

A 15-20-minute film will be produced along with a multimedia digital program using the contents of the film. Ten to 12 short cuts of the film will be produced for public consumption and shared via social media networks. These video vignettes will be produced and tailored to short-attention span viewing that predominates Facebook and other online media. The intention of these vignettes will be to inform public opinion regarding the challenges associated with coal ash pond closure alternatives and encourage public input in the watershed planning process for the Tensaw-Apalachee Watershed to ensure educated and informed environmental management planning and implementation into the future.

MBNEP anticipates the cost of this production and program to be \$40,000 and is requesting funding in the amount of \$15,000 from both Mobile and Baldwin counties, with the remainder to be funded through other sources, including, but not limited to, each County's Legislative Delegation and MBNEP base funding through the EPA. We plan to have a completed product by August 30 for distribution to local government officials as well as for use in a wider community awareness campaign.

We look forward to favorable consideration of our request and would be happy to discuss further should you have any questions I can be reached at 251-380-7940 or at [rswann@mobilebaynep.com](mailto:rswann@mobilebaynep.com).

Best regards,



Roberta Swann  
Director

Wayne Dyess, County Administrator  
Ron Cink, Budget Director  
Christie Davis, Senior Budget Accountant