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LETTERS

Public suffering is worsened when science is ignored

Despite decades of well-founded, science-based warnings, Georgia's policies have defiantly continued to worsen climate-change impacts.

In defending their reckless decisions, undoubtedly Georgia leaders will claim that Helene's massive destruction was unrelated to rising temperatures caused by the release of carbon dioxide and methane, epitomized by Georgia Power's profitable, Public-Service-Commission-sanctioned combustion of fossil-fuels.

Yet, scientific evaluation underscores the tragedy of Georgia's negligence:

Michael Wehner, a senior scientist ... said he and his colleagues conducted a "climate change attribution" analysis of [Helene's] rainfall, seeking to determine how global warming contributed to the event. Their findings show that rainfall totals observed in parts of Georgia and the Carolinas were ... about 20 times more likely because of human-caused global warming. The authors estimate climate change "may have caused as much as 50% more rainfall...."

[Drew Kann in *Atlanta-Journal-Constitution*.]

These findings are especially relevant because a study committee of Georgia's General Assembly is gathering information needed to prepare legislation addressing disaster mitigation and resilience. As stated in a resolution creating the committee, "[Georgia] will benefit from a coordinated and collaborative effort to develop comprehensive ... solutions to protect this state and its citizens, businesses, and natural resources [from the impacts of extreme weather] by accounting for current risks as well as projected future conditions."

Unquestionably, this legislative study is timely and important. However, it would be foolhardy to limit its focus to devising methods for protecting Georgians from the very events that state energy policies are making more disastrous. Safeguards would greatly improve if officials honored science instead of profits.

David Kyler
Center for a Sustainable Coast
Saint Simons Island