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Ashe, Alleghany Want Role In Dam Project

SPARTA -- Ashe and Alleghany counties have asked the Federal Power Commission to give them "the same status" as the Department of the Interior, the states of North Carolina and West Virginia and the Appalachian Power Co. in the latest round of hearings on the company's proposed Blue Ridge project.

The final brief from the counties, prepared by their joint counsel, Edmund I. Adams of Sparta, says this should be done because "it is their land which is being taken." "Their governments," it continues, "will have to meet the problems created by the applicant (the power company) and by the Department of In-

terior while the applicant goes about the business of making money and the Department of Interior sits in Washington and dictates policy." "The brief focuses on the "environmental, economic and social damages" the two counties will suffer if the \$300 million hydroelectric

project is carried out as proposed. It discusses: --Relocation problems created by the project that "neither the applicant, the Department of Interior, nor the commission have paid any significant attention to." --Industries whose "very existence is threatened by the

project." --The loss of at least 10 per cent of the present tax base in the two counties because "a high percentage of the best land" in them will be flooded and, consequently, not taxable. --Dairy farms, representing investments of more than \$250,000 and supporting "a considerable segment of the local community," that would be taken by the project.

And it contends that the power company and the Department of Interior have avoided studies that would provide accurate information on these losses because "they know the probable result." The brief says there was much less opposition in the two counties to the original plan for the project. Modifications in this plan almost doubled the amount of land that would be flooded.

ly false because the modifications have made the project "totally unacceptable" to local citizens. The two counties also expressed resentment about "the false conception" that they are in serious economic trouble. This conception, they say, has been perpetuated by the power company and the Department of the Interior to make the commission feel that they are in such bad shape the project cannot hurt them further.

And it calls for control of the shoreline by local governmental units rather than the power company. The project, the brief concludes, "entails actually changing, to a great extent, the economic and social complexion of the counties from farm and light industrial to rec-

reational, a change which the local population does not want. "At the very least, if this must be done, it should be done in such a way as to penalize them the least and others the most and not vice versa." The counties urged the commission not to "rush to decision, just for the sake of having a decision."

The brief calls the idea that the counties will ever recover from the impact of the initial loss of tax revenue "a pipe dream."

It charges that both the power company and the Department of the Interior are making claims about "local climate" that are now complete-

The brief describes "the prospect of vast, bare red banks and mud flats to be created by up to 12 feet of draw-down on the upper impoundment" as the "most horrible and disgusting feature of the entire project."

It asks that this low-flow augmentation feature be eliminated completely from the

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