

Supplemental Talking Points

For Stephen — additions to fold into his own talking points draft, drawn from the health-study review, pollutant tracking, and water-use comparison done this week. Use whatever's useful, skip the rest.

On the health studies being cited

Don't call the Harvard/SELC report "junk" — it's legitimate science and saying otherwise is an easy, credibility-costing mistake if anyone checks. The honest pushback is scale and technology, not rigor.

Harvard/SELC (Fluvanna) report: real Harvard biostatistics work (Dominici Lab), but it models a 1,540 MW combined-cycle plant with SCR emissions controls — roughly 3x Ballast's 500 MW, and we don't yet know if Ballast uses the same technology. Scaled down linearly, its own numbers land around \$9-16M/yr and 0.5-1.1 premature deaths/yr, not the raw \$27-50M figure that gets quoted. The fair point: "different size, unconfirmed technology — the dollar figures don't transfer as-is."

Stanford/NTEC memo: this one is fair to characterize as advocacy work — a law-school policy clinic memo commissioned by an environmental group, explicitly recommending loan denial, not an independent epidemiological study.

The gas-stove/benzene study: real, peer-reviewed science, but it's about unburned gas VOC/benzene leaks from home appliances — a different pollutant and pathway than a power plant's combustion stack PM_{2.5}/NO_x/SO_x. Don't use it to directly support "gas stoves are worse than the plant" — that's a mismatch someone can call out.

Open item: we still don't have public confirmation of Ballast's actual generation technology (combined-cycle+SCR vs. simple-cycle vs. reciprocating). That's the one fact that would let any of these comparisons scale honestly — worth asking Connell directly Thursday.

On water use (the corn comparison)

Connell's corn-vs-plant water comparison is a reasonable instinct but doesn't map cleanly — better comparisons exist depending on what's actually driving the conversation.

Low-water generation options exist: fuel cells, reciprocating engines, small/linear generators, and simple-cycle turbines all use near-zero water — no steam cycle to cool. Combined-cycle (~2,800 gal/MWh) is the only option that trades meaningfully more water for better NOx control via SCR. If water use becomes a real sticking point, that's a genuine design lever Meridian has.

Biomass isn't the "green" alternative it sounds like: comparable water use to a coal steam plant, and higher combustion pollutants than gas — worth knowing if it's ever raised as a compromise option.

Data-center cooling water depends on heat rejection, not chip cooling: cold-plate/immersion/air cooling at the chip level doesn't determine the water number — whether the building rejects heat through an evaporative tower (high water) or a dry cooler (near-zero) does. Worth being precise about which combination Dreadnaught would actually use before anyone repeats a water figure.

On pollutants — don't lump them together

NOx, SOx, particulate matter, VOCs, ozone, and GHGs are chemically and legally distinct — treating them as one "air quality" bucket weakens our credibility if someone parses a citation closely.

Most speakers at the 7/14 hearing only ever named particulate matter specifically, even when their broader argument implied the full mix. Only one speaker (Emily Poole, SCELP) named all four major categories in one statement. If we respond to "air quality" concerns, matching the specificity of what was actually said reads as more credible than a blanket rebuttal.

Pulled from: [MGW.reference.thursday-connell-briefing.071526.v1.html](#), [MGW.reference.water-use-comparison.071526.v2.html](#), [MGW.reference.ballast-pollutant-chart.071526.v1.html](#). Local copy: [MGW.talkingpoints.stephen-supplement.071526.v1.html](#).