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Posted on Wed, Feb. 13, 2008

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Gore boosts Dellinger in Lt. Gov. race

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RALEIGH Hampton Dellinger, a Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor of North Carolina, got what neither Sen. Hillary Clinton nor Sen. Barack Obama has obtained: a political plug from Al Gore.

Dellinger had lunch with the Nobel laureate and former vice president at his Nashville home Friday, where they discussed Dellinger's opposition to Duke Energy's cliffside coal-fired power plant.

"I applaud Hampton's efforts to combat climate change through reduced utility reliance on coal," Gore said in a prepared statement. "His vision and leadership are a tremendous asset to North Carolina. Hampton Dellinger would make a great Lt. Governor."

Dellinger, former legal counsel to Gov. Mike Easley, stopped short of calling Gore's comments an endorsement but said he has been inspired by Gore's work. Gore, Democratic nominee for president in 2000, shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to combat climate change.

The two first met during the 1992 Clinton-Gore presidential campaign and remained in touch through Gore's brother-in-law, a friend of Dellinger's. During their meeting Friday, Gore showed Dellinger an updated computer slide show of one of his presentations on environmental threats.

"I was so engaged in the discussion of policy and politics," Dellinger said, "that I neglected to ask if I could see his Nobel Peace Prize."

Dellinger's father, Walter Dellinger, held top posts in the Clinton-Gore administration Justice Department, including acting solicitor general, the lawyer in charge of arguing the government's cases before the Supreme Court. Walter Dellinger also was a legal adviser to Gore during the U.S. Supreme Court arguments over the 2000 election results.

N.C. Sen. Walter Dalton, of Rutherfordton, Canton Mayor Pat Smathers and Winston-Salem councilman Dan Besse also are seeking the Democratic nomination for lieutenant governor.

Read tomorrow's Charlotte Observer for more details on this developing story.



COURTESY OF HAMPTON DELLINGER

Former Vice President Al Gore shows his most current presentation on climate change to Hampton Dellinger, Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor, at Gore's home in Nashville.



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