

MORE THAN 1,200 COULD DIE UNDER NUCLEAR RELICENSING PROGRAM

Public Hearing Testimony – July 31, 2002

To: Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Re: Peach Bottom Operating License Renewal - 2014 to 2034

Submitted by: Sandy C. Smith, member of Pennsylvania Environmental Network

Thank you for letting me speak today although I am angered that this old nuclear plant is even up for License Renewal. The NRC's own standards stated Peach Bottom was supposed to close ²⁰ years ago. What has changed? Has anyone from the NRC personally inspected EVERY peice of rusty metel, worn parts, fractured cement? There is no way Peach Bottom can ~~not~~ operate safely or economically and should be shut down according to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's [NRC] own figures! When deaths, health and environmental desolation are added up, Beach Bottom is NOT a cheap source of energy--only a cheap way for the owners to make billions. Is Peach Bottom required to put up a bond and for how much to assure York Co. that if they go into bankruptcy we will not be left paying for clean up? How much, if any, insurance is Peach Bottom's old plant required to carry that would cover an accident? What will happen if/when the plant becomes so unsafe that our land values go down and we can no longer life here?

According to the Federal Register notice, each relicensing is expected to be responsible for the release of 14,800 person-rem of radiation during its 20-year life extension. The figure includes releases from the nuclear fuel chain that supports reactor operation, as well as from the reactors themselves. The NRC calculates that this level of radiation release spread over the population will cause **12 cancer deaths per unit**. Accidents and non-routine radiation releases are not included in the NRC's figure, and could cause still **higher casualties**. The NRC only calculated likely cancer deaths, so deaths from other radiation-induced diseases and non-fatal cancers are not included in its calculations. **There are not twelve people in York County willing to give up their life for Beach Bottom!** TMI is close by... The NRC has said it expects as many as 100 reactors to apply for license extensions; this would result in some 1,200 cancer deaths among the U.S. population.

Pennsylvania has the 2nd highest number of nuclear reactors and the 2nd highest amount of nuclear waste. The state already possesses 922 sites identified by the EPA where radioactive contamination may exist. Thus, the reason for PA being told by Washington they **MUST** have a **nuclear dumping site!** **PA does NOT want a Nuclear Dump!**

Nuclear power is not an 'emissions-free' technology. The entire nuclear fuel chain: the uranium, primarily mines on the lands remaining to indigenous people; uranium conversion; enrichment; fuel fabrication--each step exposes workers and communities to radioactivity, and each step generates radioactive wastes. Radionuclides defy the concept of "disposal"; they don't go away, we just move them around. There is no such thing as a nuclear dump that won't eventually leak. The NRC acknowledges that the allowable limit (100 millirems a year) for radiation exposure via air from any reactor to the general public will cause a fatal cancer in 1 out of 286 people exposed. This is very high when compared to the standard of 1 in 1 million considered an "acceptable" level of human sacrifice for other industrial activities.

The 1986 catastrophe at Chernobl has seriously affected the health and welfare of the Belarusan people. The average life expectancy of women has declined by 5 years. Only 10% of the children are completely healthy. Cancer among adults and children have increased in Ukraine and Moldova as well. Two-thirds of Ukraine is contaminated and 70% of the food. The watershed of the Kiev basin has been so contaminated that it would require \$200 billion just to purify the water--40 million people have to drink it. **TMI was 30 min. from melt-down.** **How much disaster insurance does Peach Bottom carry for York Co.? We have a right to know.**

NRC has offered to pay the costs for two days supply of potassium iodide pills to people living within 10 miles of a nuclear power plant. Thyroid cancer is a major result of reactor accidents, the exposure can continue for days even after one leaves the area. If a nuclear accident occured during a natural disaster--earthquak, hurricane, blizzard, ice storm--or attact, evacuation would be difficult and time consuming and people would need at le^{ast} 10 days to a month's supply. EPA Manual [Manual of Protective Action Guides and Protective Actions for Nuclear Incidents, EPA-400-R-92-001(May 1992)] quotes the FDA as stating that, "potassium iodide will have substantial benefit even if it is taken 3 or 4 hours after acute exposure." The NRC would also have to stockpile iodine pills in schools, day care centers, places of work, etc. Soaring rates of thyroid cancer are still appearing in children from

the former Soviet Union who were exposed to the Chernobyl nuclear accident and who received too little potassium iodide, and too late. There is no way even this seemingly simple protection can be carried out. Why do our tax dollars have to pay for Peach Bottom, a private company's hazardous operation?

In the past three years, old or worn-out equipment has caused dozens of incidents requiring plants to shut down. On May and August 2000, Peach Bottom Unit 3 was forced into emergency shutdown when an instrument valve failed and caused a leak of contaminated reactor coolant outside of primary containment. Much of the discussion since the September 11th attacks has focused on the resistance of reactor containment structures to aircraft strikes. Peach Bottom will not hold up because it was not built to operate this long or withstand an attack. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) needs to analyze this issue so that its answer is known rather than debated. More importantly, the NRC must address the vulnerability of spent fuel storage at all US nuclear power plants now. Spent fuel pools contain more highly radioactive fuel than the reactor cores. Spent fuel pools at all US nuclear plants are located outside the reactor containment. Highly radioactive fuel assemblies are stored after their removal from the reactor core. Water storage is required because spent fuel assemblies continue to emit considerable amounts of both heat and radiation for many years. Without cooling, the fuel pool water will heat up and boil. If the water boils or drains away, the spent fuel assemblies will overheat and either melt or catch on fire. NRC studies have estimated that many thousands of people living within 50 miles could die from the radiation released when spent fuel assemblies melt or catch on fire. This can happen without an attack. An aircraft or missile would not need to completely level the fuel building to cause harm. It would merely need to crack the concrete wall or floor and drain the water out. The spent fuel pool is not designed to withstand aircraft impacts and explosive forces.

We must assess the Nuclear Age itself in the wake of Chernobyl. There are more than 450 reactors in operation on the planet today. Each generates radioactive wastes that will be a threat to human health for hundreds of thousands of years. Each routinely releases radioactivity into the air and water. Poland was the only country that protected their children with iodine pills. We have seen how far radiation can spread which depends on the wind. We have also witnessed smoke from Canadian forest fires; radiation travels the same paths. **If nukes are so safe, why does the phonebook have evacuation routes, why is the industry trying to figure out where to dump their deadly waste, & why is \$46,000 of York Co. taxes budgeted yearly for Radiation Emergency Response? If the NRC does not close down Peach Bottom, we will not need to worry about terrorists because we have our government representing the corporate world of nuclear energy plants already terrorizing us!**

Thank you,



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