

From: "Mary Lampert" <lampert@adelphia.net>  
 To: <fxc@nrc.gov>  
 Date: Mon, Jul 21, 2003 8:28 PM  
 Subject: Re: interface problems with NRC

July 21, 2003

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To the Nuclear Regulatory Commission:

Pilgrim Security Watch wishes to add our organization's name to the comments by Mothers for Peace, attached, regarding the public's ability to meaningfully participate in NRC's decision making process affecting our communities.

It is more than clear that industry has no difficulty in securing closed meetings with the NRC to essentially write their own rules.

No better example of the cozy relationship between the licensees and NRC was provided at the Boston NRC Scoping Session on updating the EIS for re-licensing. The licensee's did not feel it even necessary to attend, excepting one low-level representative from Pilgrim, and did not feel it necessary to even make comment. Why bother? The rules have been written so that re-licensing is simply a "rubber-stamp." The Boston meeting made it clear that the public safety community holds the NRC in little to no respect - mere apologists for the industry.

This is unconscionable considering the facts that the industry has aged sooner than expected; what to do with the long-lived, toxic waste remains a mystery; footprints of radiation-linked disease are found in reactor communities surrounding our reactors; emergency plans are not worth the paper that they are written on; and nuclear reactors are on terrorist's short lists.

None of this matters to the NRC - these issues are "off the table." NRC is either "studying them" or again have played the "risk-assessment game" - put false assumptions in the equation and, no surprise, get false answers out of the equation.

The word on the street is that we have not had an accident because of pure luck - not because of oversight by the NRC. However, our luck will run out one of these days and then, too late, the country and NRC may wake up.

With regret,

ADM-013

ADM-03  
 Add: B. Zaleman (Bx 2)

Mary Lampert

Pilgrim Security Watch

148 Washington Street

Duxbury MA 02332

Tel 781-934-0389

Email lampert@adelphia.net

San Luis Obispo

P.O. Box 164

(805) 773-3881

[www.mothersforpeace.org](http://www.mothersforpeace.org)

July 21, 2003

Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Re: interface problems with NRC

There are several problems that discourage and frustrate public participation in Nuclear Regulatory matters. These are:

- The ADAMS website is extremely difficult and exasperating to navigate;
- There is inadequate notice to states and organizations regarding public meetings;

- Public meetings on generic issues are not held in reactor communities, resulting in low attendance and extra expense for the few public members that make the effort to attend;
  
- The NRC refuses to allow full hearings on issues of safety that could seriously impact reactor communities;
  
- The overuse of acronyms by the NRC staff in public notices make them meaningless to interested parties;
  
- Members of the community who do attend meetings are often treated inappropriately, i.e. searches, metal detectors, weapon sniffing dogs, no signs, no speaking..;
  
- NRC attorneys clearly support the industry and the utilities;
  
- The NRC is slow to respond to allegations sent by local organizations who have received information from utility whistleblowers;
  
- The NRC's investigation of allegations by whistleblowers is often inadequate, resulting in expenses to organizations that have brought those concerns to the NRC's attention. Many of these allegations have later resulted in the Department of Labor upholding the whistleblower's concerns;
  
- The technical and legal issues are beyond the expertise of the general public, resulting in massive expenses for consultants for those who choose to participate, with no intervenor compensation. The intervenors are paying the expense of the utility experts through rates and the expenses of the NRC through taxes;
  
- There is a general feeling that there always exists a "Catch 22," and the private sector can not make a difference.

For over 30 years the San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace have brought important issues of safety to the attention of the NRC. We continue to participate, even though frustrated by NRC processes and are often left with the belief that no one at the NRC is listening. It is virtually impossible for the public to have the same relationship with the NRC that is available to the nuclear industry.

The NRC must look closely at its credibility in reactor communities. Your mandate is to protect public health and safety. Sadly, when safety issues are brought to the NRC's attention it is the utilities that have the financial means to provide experts to dissuade the NRC of their importance. Neither the NRC, nor the public have equal access or equal finances to provide credible opposing opinions.

The San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace requests that the NRC seriously consider resolving the problems addressed in our comments. To do so would be to the advantage of all who believe that safety must come first when deciding nuclear power plant safety issues.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rochelle Becker

San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace