

From: Mindy Landau , EDO
To: Conchita See; David Skeen; Eric Benner; Eric Weinstein; Francine Goldberg; Janet Kotra; Kim Karcagi; Lynn Scattolini; Mark Delligatti; Merri Horn; Michael Lesar; Ramin Assa; Renee Pedersen; Richard Rosano; Sandy Joosten; Steven Reynolds; Sue Gagner; Susan Frant; Tanya Mensah
Date: 7/22/03 4:53PM
Subject: Fwd: NRC relationship to the public

Another comment letter FYI....

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From: Caryl and Pete Wagner <cpwags@charter.net>
To: <FXC@nrc.gov>
Date: 7/22/03 2:30PM
Subject: NRC relationship to the public

This letter is concerned with the interface between the public and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. It is written of behalf of the 2000 member Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club. Our chapter serves San Luis Obispo County, the home of Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant.

We have observed that the NRC lacks credibility in the community. It appears to be remote, unresponsive, and insensitive to expressions of public concern. Specifically,

There are too few public meetings aimed at informing the community of matters in its vital interest, and there is no followup. Our community, for example, is deeply troubled over two issues, the proposed Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI) at Diablo and the apparent absence of any substantial plan to protect the plant from acts of malice. In recent memory, the NRC has held only one local public session, in late March 2003, to solicit local concerns. This meeting was extremely well attended. Many thoughtful and carefully prepared comments were presented by the audience, but there has been no response by NRC to the issues that were raised there.

Locally held NRC meetings open to the public, for example, periodic End of Cycle reports on Diablo, are permeated with technical jargon. No effort is made to communicate to the audience in lay language what is being covered. Any such attempts have to be teased out by the audience during the public comment period, and these tend to have little educational value because the presenters are not skilled at explaining technical subjects in non-technical language.

At formal hearings on the ISFSI by the Licensing Board, NRC attorneys have given the clear impression of favoritism toward the applicant and indifference toward the contenders. This behavior is conspicuous to anyone in the audience. It is simply inappropriate. What appears to be an arm in arm relationship between the regulatory body and the utility should in reality be an arms length relationship.

The NRC has a public relations problem. Credibility could be restored by keeping the community informed periodically about actions and plans pertaining to Diablo, holding more frequent public meetings, responding directly to questions raised by the public, and making a serious effort to communicate with the community in language designed to inform and educate.

Peter E. Wagner, Chair, Conservation Committee, Santa Lucia Chapter, Sierra Club