

# Three Mile Island Alert, Inc.

PRESS RELEASE

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## **TMI-Alert to Oppose Relicensing of the Susquehanna Nuclear Plant**

(Berwick, Pa) - Three Mile Island Alert, Inc. (TMIA) announced its decision to oppose PPL's premature request to relicense the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station (SSES) to operate for 20 more years. PPL has applied to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for permission to run the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station until 2043 [Unit-1] and 2045 [Unit-2].

Eric Epstein, the group's chairman stated, "TMI-Alert will vigorously oppose relicensing until PPL pays its back taxes, secures radioactive waste, and proves it has the financial resources to decommission the plant." Mr. Epstein has sued the NRC, FEMA and the Department of Justice, "to compel PPL to provide radiological emergency plans that include nursery schools, day care facilities, and senior citizen residences."

TMI-Alert believes PPL's application is premature. "It would be irresponsible for federal regulators to begin a relicensing process 17 years before the original license expires. PPL wants to secure an extension to preempt public challenges over additional safety problems, which tend to increase as plants age."

\* *TMI-Alert is a safe-energy organization based in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and founded in 1977. TMIA monitors Peach Bottom, Susquehanna, and Three Mile Island nuclear generating stations. **tmia.com***

# **9 Reasons Why TMI-Alert Opposes Early Relicensing of the Susquehanna Nuclear Plant**

## **1. PPL has failed to provide workable emergency plans for “special needs” populations living within ten miles of the SSES.**

Mr. Epstein, Chairman of TMI-Alert, sued FEMA, the NRC and the Department of Justice to compel all Pennsylvania nuclear utilities to provide emergency planning for the most vulnerable populations living near reactors. The Pennsylvania Attorney General referred the case to the United States Government Accountability Office on September 14, 2006.

## **2. Tax break for the rich:**

PPL pledged that tax revenues would increase for local communities after deregulation. In fact, the opposite has occurred. The “old version” of the plant was valued at **\$800 million** in 1998 and 1999. The “new” SSES valuation in 2001 was approximately \$160 million. The actual valuation of the plant, or the amount PPL is paying taxes on, is **\$56 million**. Yet, **PPL is collecting \$2.97 billion in rate recoveries** for cost overruns associated with the construction of Susquehanna. There is no replacement revenue for local governmental bodies and **schools**, and local property owners are paying **for PPL’s tax breaks**.

## **3. Financial Stability:**

PPL can not predict with any degree of confidence how much it will cost to clean up the rad waste site after the plant closes. Projected costs for nuclear decommissioning of Susquehanna have **increased by at least 553%** between 1981 and 2003.

In **1981** PP&L predicted that its share to decommission SSES was between **\$135 and \$191 million**. By 1985 the cost estimate had climbed to \$285 million. And by 1991, the cost in 1988 dollars for the “radioactive portion” of decommissioning, was \$350 million.

The Company’s contractor conducted a site-specific study which projected that the cost of decommissioning would be \$725 million in 1993 dollars. The 1994 cost estimate remained steady at \$724 million, but the market value of securities held and accrued in income in the trust funds declined, and thus the estimate reflected another increase in decommissioning costs (PP&L Base Rate Case, Page, 1016, Lines 7-27 and Page 1017, Lines 1-24.)

By **2006** PPL projected costs to decommission Susquehanna to be almost **\$1 billion**.

#### **4. Safeguards and terrorism:**

Since 9-11, nuclear plants have been recognized as terrorist targets, but Susquehanna is unprepared. There are measures that could mitigate risks of various attacks by air, water and ground, but the industry has lobbied NRC not to adopt them, in order to keep costs down.

#### **5. Uprates for shareholders:**

PPL has requested permission to amp up the capacity of the plant, even though they believe it’s worth only **\$56 million**. Last time PPL announced it was planning to increase capacity, **shareholders** hit the jackpot. In a Petition to the NRC to increase capacity by 100 megawatts, PPL said “The **\$120 million** in improvements at the Susquehanna plant are expected to **add earnings** as soon as they go into operation” (PPL, April 23, 2001).

## **6. Water supplies:**

The magnitude of the amount of water used at a nuclear power plant is readily evidenced at the SSES every day. The Susquehanna Steam Electric Station loses 14.93 million gallons of water per unit daily as vapor out of the cooling tower stack. Eleven million gallons per day are returned to the river as cooling-tower basin blow down. **On average, 29.86 million gallons per day are taken from the river and not returned;** even during periods of **drought!** (PPL, Pennsylvania Environmental Permit Report.)

## **7. No permanent storage of waste:**

The Susquehanna nuclear power plant produces approximately **30 metric tons** of high-level radioactive waste **per year per reactor**. The nuclear garbage has no forwarding address. In reality, the SSES is a *de facto* high-level radioactive waste site on the Susquehanna River. There is no solution in sight for disposal of highly radioactive "spent" fuel rods, although the National Academy of Sciences and other technical experts argue that moving all radioactive waste into hardened, dry storage would reduce the risks associated with current high-density cooling pools at each plant. Susquehanna is one of 21 nuclear power plants where used reactor fuel pools have reached capacity.

## **8. Age-related safety problems will increase:**

Susquehanna was designed to last for 40 years, but many systems and components are already being stressed by radiation, high heat and pressures, and other factors. U.S. plants are suffering from corrosion, large component failures, original design flaws and other unresolved safety issues. At least a dozen U.S. plants have recently discovered radioactive tritium leakage into groundwater from pipes or cooling pools.

**9. NRC's industry-driven relicensing process limits public involvement, and disallows debate over factors involving a plant's safety and security record.**

PPL is applying for the license renewal so early due to the rubber-stamp approach by the Bush administration's NRC. PPL wants to secure an extension to preempt public challenges over additional safety problems, which tend to increase as plant's age.