

PMSTPCOL PEmails

From: Chet Poslusny
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2008 7:03 AM
To: Nilesch Chokshi
Subject: Meeting Feedback
Attachments: STP News Articles.docx

Thanks for the opportunity to help out with the process. I truly think the meeting went very well.

I am attaching a file with articles about the meeting that I cut and pasted. I think we should have an LA or someone maintain a public outreach set of files on the G drive to include them and files of questions and significant comments that we receive. This info can be very useful to future speakers and support staff.

I am still working my my collection of questions and comments and will provide them to you today or tomorrow with a general list of feedback observations and suggestions as well.

Chet

Hearing Identifier: SouthTexas34Public_EX
Email Number: 346

Mail Envelope Properties (Chet.Poslusny@nrc.gov20080207070233)

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From: Chet Poslusny

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"Nilesh Chokshi" <Nilesh.Chokshi@nrc.gov>
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NRC hears STP backers, detractors

By Mike Reddell

Bay City Tribune

Published February 6, 2008

Supporters and opponents of STP's units 3 and 4 took center stage at the first of two Nuclear Regulatory Commission's public meetings on the plant's environmental impact Tuesday.

An estimated 260 people attended the NRC's afternoon public scoping session at the Bay City Civic Center, while the evening meeting was expected to draw more.

The Tuesday sessions were aimed at drawing public comments that will be part of the NRC's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that includes suitability of the site and how seismic, flooding or hurricanes could affect the plant, said George Wunder, NRC's senior project manager, division of new reactor licensing.

Wunder said the environmental and safety review for STP's units 3 and 4 also would include how the reactors are built, quality assurances and the security and training involved with 5,000 construction workers.

"Through the environmental review, we can document decisions in a clear way to ensure the entire process is open as possible, no matter what decision is made," Wunder said.

While the NRC's permit application process calls for tandem environmental and safety reviews, STP found "design-support issues" and asked NRC for a partial hold of the safety review Jan. 10. NRC put most of the safety review on hold Jan. 30.

About five protestors — mostly from San Antonio — carrying placards that carried anti-nuke messages greeted people arriving at the civic center for the meeting. They were members of the

Southwest Workers Union, which opposes San Antonio's City Public Service (CPS) partnership in STP.

When NRC opened the meeting to public comments, it got a mix of several local officials who spoke to the benefits that STP has given Matagorda County and people from different organizations that oppose NRC granting STP a permit to build the two new reactors.

Matagorda County Sheriff James Mitchell told the NRC officials that STP goal is to protect people — “They’ve been doing that for 20 years.” Noting the training STP has given law enforcement officers here, Mitchell said the city-county combined SWAT team’s certification came from STP.

Bay City Mayor Richard Knapik said STP has “brought a culture of excellence and community spirit” to Matagorda County, noting that STP employees serve on city councils and school boards in the communities where they live.

Knapik said STP’s units 3 and 4 is a \$64 billion investment in the county, as are the 800 permanent jobs the units will bring.

“Let’s talk about the environment,” said Mitch Thames, president of Bay City Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture.

He cited Matagorda County’s status of winning the Audubon’s North American Christmas Bird Count nine of past 10 years — with 236 species spotted in the most recent survey here — as evidence of STP’s environmental impact.

Thames followed up by touting the county’s excellent fishing and water-fowl hunting.

Other officials supporting STP’s permit application were: State Rep. Mike O’Day; Palacios Mayor Joe Morton; D.C. Dunham, executive director of Bay City Community Development Corporation; and Owen Bludau, executive director of Matagorda County Economic Development Corporation.

While several people also spoke in opposition to building units 3 and 4, perhaps the most contentious was from well-known Tom “Smitty” Smith, director of Public Citizen’s Texas Office.

Smith took issue with the NRC continuing the environmental review, while the safety review is on hold.

Smith said the NRC was allowing STP to gather more information for its safety review, while the commission had a Feb. 18 deadline on comments to the environmental and safety scoping process, and a Feb. 26 cutoff on intervening.

Smith and other opponents of the units also spoke about the impact of uranium mining in Kleberg and Karnes counties, the state’s overall lack of radioactive waste storage and the climate’s change on future river flows.

“Radioactive waste is the real bugaboo in the room that no one wants to talk about,” said Cyrus Reed, with the Sierra Club in Austin. “Where does it come from and what is the full impact?”

Also speaking against the plant were: Susan Dancer, with Matagorda County Citizens for Nuclear Industry Accountability; Karen Hadden, executive director of the Sustainable Energy and Economic Development (SEED) Coalition; and members of the Southwest Workers Union.

Business

Feb. 5, 2008, 11:23PM

Bay City debates nuclear power in its backyard

Commission hearing on proposed plant expansion draws strong support and opposition

By TOM FOWLER

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BAY CITY — The nuclear power debate returned to the public square in Texas on Tuesday when activists, politicians and citizens lined up to speak up about proposals to expand the nuclear power plant near Bay City.

In a pair of public meetings, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission took comments on what issues should be considered in evaluating a proposed expansion of the South Texas Project, the 2,700-megawatt power plant in rural Matagorda County.

The two new reactors could be the first new units approved for construction in the U.S. in 30 years.

"We are not here to promote nuclear energy," said Nilesh Chokshi, deputy director of environmental review in the NRC's office of new reactors. Rather the agency is focused on the safe construction and operation of the nation's nuclear power plants, he said.

Located south of Bay City near Wadsworth, the plant broke ground in 1976. The work was completed in fits and starts because of cost overruns — from a \$1 billion estimate in 1973 to \$6 billion when finished in 1986 — and a change of contractor because of quality concerns.

The plant has ranked high for energy output in recent years, however, with Unit 1 named the top producing nuclear power generator in the world last year.

New Jersey-based NRG Energy, Texas' second-largest power producer, owns the largest stake in the plant, 44 percent. Public utilities in San Antonio and Austin own 40 percent and 16 percent, respectively.

The proposed expansion drew political support during Tuesday's meetings.

"You've heard of NIMBY — not in my backyard?" said Bay City Mayor Richard Knapik. "Well, I'm for PIMBY — please, in my backyard. What community would not welcome a \$6.4 billion investment in their backyard, 4,000 construction jobs and 800 permanent jobs?"

Waste storage issue

But many speakers opposed the expansion, citing among other concerns the lack of a permanent storage site for nuclear waste, the possible effects on groundwater of uranium mining in the U.S. and abroad and insufficient attention to conservation and energy efficiency as alternatives to new power plants.

"You're being given a false choice here, either two new nuclear reactors or no new jobs," said Laura Cushing, an organizer with the Southwest Workers Union from San Antonio, who spoke against the project.

A number of speakers criticized the licensing process and what they said was a small window of opportunity for the public to intervene.

Tom "Smitty" Smith, director of the Texas office of Public Citizen, noted that two key parts of the plant's expansion application are incomplete and that Nuclear Regulatory Commission officials stopped review of them until the operator works out technical issues with the firm designing the reactors.

"How can we in the community have a fair and adequate opportunity to review all of the application to determine if we want to intervene or raise issues if the application isn't even complete?" Smith asked. "Will you guarantee us a free pass on documents that might later come across your desk from the company?"

Provision to intervene

Jim Biggins, an attorney with the commission, said a provision lets the public intervene at a later date if applicants file documents that raise new issues.

Georgia Rice Herreth, a former Bay City council member, said she thought the community was better prepared to handle the challenges that might come with the building of two more reactors than it was when the first two were built.

"There was a lot of controversy then, as there is now, but that's good because it brings out things that may not have been considered," Herreth said.

Comments from Tuesday's meetings will be used by the agency in considering the expansion application, particularly the draft environmental impact statement that is expected to be filed in the next year or so. Another public meeting will follow the filing of that document.

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Nuke proposal meeting draws fans and foes

Web Posted: 02/05/2008 10:54 PM CST

**Anton Caputo
and Vicki Vaughan**
Express-News

BAY CITY — Business and political leaders of this rural Texas region lined up Tuesday to tell federal regulators they welcome NRG Energy's plan to build two more nuclear power reactors at the nearby South Texas Project.

"We've all heard of NIMBY — not in my backyard," said Bay City Mayor Richard Knapik. "I stand for PIMBY — please in my backyard."

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Elected officials and those in the economic development community who attended the Nuclear Regulatory Commission scoping meeting echoed Knapik's sentiments.

The meeting was set to discuss environmental issues associated with the proposed expansion of the South Texas Project from two reactors to four. San Antonio-based CPS Energy would be a likely partner.

More than 200 people attended the afternoon session, the first of two three-hour meetings scheduled Tuesday. Many disagreed with the focus elected officials put on the economic gains promised by a major expansion of the nuclear facility, arguing that it took the focus off safety, security, water availability from the Colorado River and the lack of a long-term plan to store the tons of radioactive waste created by nuclear power plants.

"We don't believe that nuclear reactors are the right path to take at this time," said Karen Hadden of the Austin-based Sustainable Energy and Economic Development Coalition.

The nuclear power industry in the United States has been at a virtual standstill since the accident at Three Mile Island in 1979. A combination of the need for clean energy in the face of global climate change and economic subsidies and incentives in the 2005 Energy Act has re-energized the industry, putting the South Texas Project expansion at the forefront of what some term a nuclear renaissance.

In Bay City, public officials warmly endorsed expanding the facility, speaking of it as a project that could offer future generations of local children a reason to stay close to home when they reach adulthood and need to find good jobs.

"STP has been an amazing corporate citizen and brought amazing economic strength," said Owen Bludau, executive director of the Matagorda County Economic Development Council.

Bay City resident Susan Dancer, who was in high school when the first two power plants were being built, had a different take. Dancer said she remembers all the hype about the economic boom in store for the community and said residents should be more wary this time around.

"Our unemployment rate is still high," Dancer said.

"Our school district is still extremely poor, and the owners and the operators of the plants still don't live here."

(Johnny Hanson/Houston Chronicle)

Diana Lopez of San Antonio (right) says she is opposed to the new reactors and supports alternative green energies.

Dancer said the community was disturbed in 2005 when NRG Energy said it would outsource 117 jobs out of about 1,100 at the two power plants.

"Where is a 50-year-old engineer going to go? Some people were 20 years into a 30-year mortgage and they were in a state of shock."

Dancer said a grass-roots organization she founded, Matagorda County Coalition for Nuclear Industry Accountability, seeks a binding agreement with South Texas Project management to guarantee that the jobs for the new reactors would be kept local.

STP President and CEO James Sheppard acknowledged that management considered outsourcing jobs in 2005, but he said the company ultimately decided not to pursue that plan.

"We intend to be here for the next 60 years," Sheppard said. "The vast majority of our employees have to be here."

CPS Energy owns 40 percent of the two power plants currently operating at the South Texas Project and is considering partnering in the proposed expansion. The utility's board recently approved \$206 million for preliminary design work on the two new plants, which are tentatively scheduled to be running by 2014 and 2015.

Several members of the San Antonio-based Southwest Workers' Union made the 200-mile trip to voice their opposition to the proposed expansion. They were particularly upset with the way CPS Energy has, in the organization's opinion, stifled public participation in its decision-making process.

"We have been left in the dark," said Genaro Rendon of the Southwest Workers' Union.

Like many at the meeting, the union pushed the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to require NRG and CPS Energy to fully investigate alternatives to nuclear power, particularly solar, wind and energy conservation, as part of its environmental review process.

Tuesday's meeting was intended to give the Nuclear Regulatory Commission input on the types of issues it should include in the plant's environmental impact statement. The whole permitting process could easily take more than three years, said federal officials, particularly since the agency has suspended work on the safety portion of the permit application because of incomplete information.

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Residents voice concerns over STP

[By Heather Menzies](#)

Bay City Tribune

Published February 4, 2008

About 55 people attended the Matagorda County Coalition for Nuclear Industry Accountability (MCCNIA) community meeting at the Service Center Tuesday night, Jan. 29.

Susan Dancer, chairperson of the MCCNIA, held the meeting as a pre-cursor to the scoping meetings that the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. in the Bay City Civic Center on Tuesday, Feb. 5.

Dancer along with Jon Block, project manager for nuclear energy climate change for Union of Concerned Scientists, Bill Wagner, former operations manager at STP and local resident and Tom “Smitty” Smith, Texas director of Public Citizen, each gave presentations voicing their concerns over unanswered questions regarding the addition of Units 3 and 4.

“UCS is historically neutral on whether nuclear power is good or bad we’re not pro-nuclear or anti-nuclear however we are pro-safety and we are pro-security and we are pro-having a clean environment,” said Block.

“That means that until nuclear deals with where to put the waste and how to deal with the post 9/11 security threats and has a regulator that really has some teeth and enforces the regulations that’s on the books evenly, fair-handed and thorough then its not a good idea to be building more plants.”

According to Block, the local community has a responsibility to make its own choices as to what is best for them over the long haul.

“We’re hoping that all of you and your friends and neighbors will feel that there is a reason to get involved — to go to the meetings that the NRC holds to inform yourselves about issues that are relevant,” said Block.

Smith used his portion of the program to voice concerns over what he said was a rush to have the applications for Units 3 and 4 approved.

“We are concerned about the rush to get this plant licensed,” said Smith.

“Is it smart to expand this plant?”

Smith said questions remained unanswered about the impact of two new units to the environment, public health, local economy and the threat of natural disaster.

Dancer and Wagner both voiced concerns about the impact to Matagorda county citizens and workers.

Dancer described an incident in 2005 when over 100 STP local workers lost their jobs due to outsourcing.

“I saw our (retail) sales fall off. I saw new car sales stop. I saw empty parking lots at restaurants. I saw houses that were being built halt on construction and it just struck me how vulnerable we are as a community to have all of our eggs in one basket that was so quick to have no dedication to us back,” said Dancer.

Although the jobs were eventually reinstated, Dancer said that something needed to be set in stone to assure the local workers that they could never be that vulnerable again.

Wagner raised concerns about the potential effects of two new reactors on local aquaculture, unanalyzed seismic events, how informed local citizens are of emergency management plans, and the accuracy of Units 3 and 4 environmental reports.