

LevyCEM Resource

From: The Silver Nightingale [laurasue@silvernightingale.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 23, 2008 11:15 PM
To: LevyColeis Resource
Subject: Public Comment: Levy Environmental Review

Re: Levy Environmental Review
US Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Reference date: Oct 17th, 2008
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Dear Folks at NRC,

I am writing to express my deep concerns about the building of any new nuclear plants in Levy County, Florida. I am a private citizen with no employment ties or economic interests in any business or organization related to energy issues. As a resident of Florida, as well as of Planet Earth, it is clear to me that building new nuclear plants at the proposed Levy County site would be extremely dangerous and very costly in a variety of ways.

There are many reasons why building new nuclear plants at the Levy site is a terrible idea. One of the big reasons is the impact this would have on water in Florida. Development and population growth in Florida have made water a very big issue here, and it's vital for us to protect the ever-dwindling sources of fresh water we still have. Two new nuclear plants on this site that has never had any power plant, let alone nuclear plants that will use massive amounts of water, is a very bad idea indeed. The water in this area is connected to a large freshwater resource for Florida, and the plant construction alone would damage these resources. The further risk of permanent groundwater contamination posed by operating nuclear plants here is very high. We have seen this kind of contamination again and again around other nuclear plants all over the country, including right here at Turkey Point in Florida. It is simply not worth the risk to our irreplaceable Florida water resources!

And frankly, we need the water that would be used by these plants for other purposes in our state, which already experiences regular droughts, and employs extensive water use restrictions throughout much of the year.

Another water-related issue here is the very real risk of flooding due to global warming. We've all seen the maps. Do we really want to build new nuclear plants on a site that could be underwater by the time the plants come online?

There is also no place for nuclear waste storage in Florida. Due to our delicate and fragile eco-system, our Floridan Aquifer which underlies our entire state and parts of four others, and the way everything in our Florida environment is interconnected, there is just no site here stable or isolated enough for any kind of nuclear waste storage - low-level or high-level. Levy County is certainly not a good place to turn into a nuclear waste dump, and as I understand it, Progress Energy has no other place to store waste from these plants. Even if PEF eventually is able to find another option, transportation of radioactive waste through our state to other sites poses additional environmental dangers. And we still have no permanent long-term solution for what to do with high-level nuclear waste, which remains radioactive for thousands upon thousands of years - so why create more of it?!

In the big environmental picture, companies like Progress Energy that want to build nuclear plants are trying to sell the idea that nuclear energy is a solution to global warming. In fact, the opposite is true. Nuclear energy is neither carbon-free nor emission-free throughout its entire life cycle, which includes a variety of wastes produced by mining uranium and making nuclear fuel, in addition to the aforementioned unsolved problem with spent fuel and other nuclear waste. This waste includes the plants themselves, which operate for a few decades, and then take, at a minimum, hundreds of years to be decommissioned.

And building new nuclear plants will directly interfere with the development of better, safer technologies by diverting much-needed resources from their development. There is enormous potential in many already-existing sustainable technologies, as well as new ones currently in development. If these promising technologies had a fraction of the resources that have been poured into the giant sinkhole that is the nuclear industry, we would not even be having this discussion. It would be crystal clear to everyone, as it is to me, that there are better, safer energy options, and that there is no need for new nuclear plants in Florida or anywhere else. If we are to save our environment and our planet, now is the time to invest everything we can into truly safe, sustainable technologies. But the huge financial investment required by new nuclear plant construction will mean that the full development of new renewable, sustainable energy technologies could be set back by years, at the time when we need these new technologies the most.

Florida in particular has abundant solar energy that is not being used. And through improved energy conservation alone, we could reduce our power consumption in Florida enormously. These are just a few of the many safer and more cost-effective ways to address our Florida energy needs, rather than building new nuclear plants.

If nuclear energy was truly cost-effective and truly a profitable business, the companies trying to build new nuclear plants would not have to keep coming back to Congress for loan guarantees, liability insurance and tax breaks. The fact that this industry cannot obtain operating insurance by any means other than Congressional action is extremely telling! Nuclear plants are uninsurable!!!! Does that sound like an environmentally safe, economically sound business to you?! It surely doesn't to me!

And haven't we had enough Congressional bailouts of failing private industries? The investments we have already made in the nuclear industry over many past decades have not paid off for the American people, and no further such investments should be made, based on their extensive existing track record.

Another very important point is the fact that nuclear plants themselves cannot be made 100% safe. Whether through equipment malfunction, operator error, or terrorist attack, nuclear plants pose an unacceptable risk, not just to those of us living in Florida, but to all life on earth. One little incident could literally mean the actual end of all life on earth! If you don't think it can happen, think about that little O ring on the Challenger. We humans are not infallible, and neither is anything we produce. This means that nuclear plants cannot, simply cannot be guaranteed to be safe. And when it comes to accidents or attacks involving nuclear materials, anything less than 100% safety is just not good enough.

In closing, I ask you to include the true costs of nuclear plants throughout their entire life cycle in your environmental calculations, including among other factors: the guaranteed damage to Florida's environment; the very real potential for enormous risks to health and life; the diversion of resources from the desperately-needed development of truly safe and sustainable energy technologies; the cost of hundreds of years of plant decommissioning; and the cost of nuclear waste storage for thousands of years to come.

Please feel free to contact me via the contact info below for any additional information or clarification.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,
Laura Sue Wilansky

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