

PaloVerdeLRCEm Resource

From: Steve Brittle [smbrittle@yahoo.com]
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To: PaloVerdeEIS Resource
Cc: dwaz@fastq.com
Subject: Additional NEPA Scoping Comments regarding Relicensure of Palo Verde Units 1, 2 and 3
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VIA EMAIL TO PaloVerde.EIS@nrc.gov and US Mail

Chief, Rulemaking and Directives Branch
Division of Administrative Services
Mailstop TWB-5B01M
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Re: Additional NEPA Scoping Comments regarding Relicensure of Palo Verde Units 1, 2 and 3

Don't Waste Arizona, Inc. (DWAZ) is a non-profit environmental organization (with a 501 c 3 status granted by the IRS) dedicated to the protection and preservation of the environment in Arizona. DWAZ is headquartered at 6205 South 12th Street, Phoenix, AZ 85042, and can be reached at 602-268-6110. On behalf of itself and it affected members, DWAZ offers the following NEPA scoping comments regarding Relicensure of Palo Verde Units 1, 2 and 3:

While analyzing and determining the additional risks posed by relicensure of aging nuclear power plants like Palo Verde's, please consider the attached article,

" Push For New Nuclear Power Sputters, But Old Reactors Still Pose Cancer Risks "

Thank you.

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Push For New Nuclear Power Sputters, But Old Reactors Still Pose Cancer Risks

CHICAGO, Illinois, July 27, 2009 --/WORLD-WIRE/-- Nuclear reactors in the United States should be phased out, and replaced by technologies that don't threaten public health with the emission of radioactive chemicals, urges the Cancer Prevention Coalition.

A recent energy bill sponsored by Congressional Republicans proposed building 100 new nuclear reactors across the United States in the next 20 years.

The proposal, which would double the current U.S. total of 104 operating nuclear reactors, would amount to a nuclear renaissance, as no new reactors have been ordered since 1978.

Concerns about global warming gave utilities the idea for this revival since reactors don't emit greenhouse gases while generating power, and utilities have stopped closing old reactors while proposing 33 new ones to be sited in New England, throughout the South and Southeast, and in Texas, Utah and Idaho.

(For a list of applications to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for approval of new reactors click here. <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/new-licensing-files/expected-new-rx-applications.pdf>)

But this month, two Swedish scientists published an article concluding that a large increase in nuclear reactors will not solve global warming.

The utilities, of course, fail to report that greenhouse gases are emitted throughout the entire nuclear fuel cycle, and operating the reactor itself is the only exception. Both the nuclear reactor industry and its support industries spew radioactive materials into local air and water, posing a serious health hazard, warns Dr. Samuel S. Epstein, chairman of the Cancer Prevention Coalition and Professor emeritus Environmental & Occupational Medicine at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health.

In the 1970s, Wall Street investors stopped funding new reactor projects due to cost and safety concerns. Today, these issues are unchanged, and private investors again gave a thumbs-down to nuclear power. A 2005 law authorizing \$18.5 billion in federal loan guarantees would only cover two reactors.

The Bush administration was a willing partner in the nuclear revival. George W. Bush became the first sitting U.S. president to visit a nuclear plant since a grim-faced President James Carter toured the damaged Three Mile Island reactor on April 1, 1979.

President Barack Obama has poured cold water on the renaissance. He rejected a request for \$50 billion in loan guarantees in the stimulus package. Additionally, he rejected further funding for developing the nuclear waste dump at Yucca Mountain Nevada, leaving utilities with no place to permanently store their highly radioactive nuclear waste. It is now being held temporarily at 55 storage sites licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and at Department of Defense sites and national laboratories across the country.

The major threat posed by nuclear reactors is not the addition of new reactors, but continuing to operate old and corroding ones, says Dr. Epstein. U.S. reactors are granted licenses for 40 years, and many are approaching that mark. Many utilities have asked regulators to extend their licenses for an additional 20 years.

"Each of the first 52 requests has been given a rubber-stamp approval, even though operating a 60 year old reactor would be a huge risk to human health," says Joseph Mangano, MPH, MBA, executive director of the Radiation and Public Health Project.

Notable exceptions are state government officials in New York and New Jersey, who are opposing the attempts to extend licenses for reactors in their states.

About 80 million Americans in 37 states live within 40 miles of a nuclear reactor, including residents of New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Miami, Phoenix, Cleveland, and Boston. "If a meltdown were to occur, safe evacuation would be impossible and many thousands would suffer from radiation poisoning or cancer," warns Dr. Epstein. "The horrifying specter of Chernobyl, or of terrorists attacking a nuclear plant, is not lost on concerned Americans."

Reactors are a real health threat, not just a potential one, a fact largely ignored by mainstream media, he declares.

To generate electricity, over 100 radioactive chemicals are created – among the most dangerous chemicals on Earth, and the same toxic mix in atomic bomb test fallout. These gases and particles, including Strontium-90, Cesium-137, and Plutonium-239, are mostly stored as waste. But some must be routinely released into air and water. Humans breathe, eat, and drink them - just as they did bomb fallout - raising the cancer risk, especially to children.

Industry and government officials argue that reactor emissions are too small to cause harm. But for years, scientists have produced study after study documenting high cancer rates near reactors. For example, a 2007 review of the scientific literature by researchers from the University of South Carolina found elevated rates of childhood cancers, particularly leukemia and brain cancers, in nearly all 17 studies examined. A 2008 study of German reactors was one of the largest ever done, and it also found high local rates of child cancer.

Mangano and colleagues published a January 2002 article in the journal "Archives of Environmental Health," showing that local infant deaths and child cancer cases plunged dramatically right after shut down whenever a U.S. reactor closed. Because the very young suffer most from radiation exposures, they benefit most when exposures are removed. This research indicated that there would be approximately 18,000 fewer infant deaths and 6,000 fewer child cancer cases over the next 20 years if all nuclear reactors were closed.

Over half the states in the United States, 31, currently host nuclear power plants. Illinois has the most with 11, Pennsylvania has nine, New Jersey has four.

While waiting for the federal government to phase out nuclear power in favor of safer alternatives, state governments should act to warn and protect their citizens, urges the Cancer Prevention Coalition.

Governors have responsibilities to take whatever political action they can to phase-out nuclear plants. In the first instance, governors should tell their citizens of the danger.

In 1954, Atomic Energy Chairman Lewis Strauss declared nuclear power "too cheap to meter." President Richard Nixon envisioned that the nation would have 1,000 reactors by this time. But the dreams of people like Strauss and Nixon were dashed by staggering costs and built-in dangers.

The attempt to revive this Cold War-era dream has been, and still is, largely talk. While the talk goes on, the nation is fast developing technologies like solar and wind power, which never run out and don't pollute. Putting millions of Americans at risk of cancer by hanging on to old reactors – that produce only 19% of America's electricity and 8% of the country's total energy – is a reckless gamble. Nuclear reactors in the U.S. should be phased out, and replaced by options that don't threaten public health.

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