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From: Ace Hoffman [mailto:rhoffman@animatedsoftware.com]  
Sent: Monday, November 16, 2009 12:36 PM  
To: Sapountzis, Alexander  
Subject: Negligently-run and negligently-regulated: Only outrage will do...

November 16th, 2009

Dear Readers,

It's very rare to get ANY "mass media" attention for nuclear issues these days.

Nevertheless, my November 5th, 2009 blog ("Lots of new faces but it's the same old SONGS...") regarding the "culture of cover-up" that exists at San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station ("SONGS"), and some of the reasons that culture should be expected to continue, was re-edited, re-worked, re-titled and republished as a Community Essay in yesterday's San Diego Union-Tribune (Sunday, November 15th, 2009). The SD U-T version of the essay can be found online here:

<http://www3.signonsandiego.com/news/2009/nov/15/nuclear-power-is-not-the-answer-renewable-energy>

Also, please be sure to view the You-Tube video from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission hearing that same day in Dana Point, California regarding management problems at San Onofre. A long-time Southern California Edison employee described the "culture of cover-up" that exists there, and suggested what the terrifying consequences might be. Here is the URL:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zP9vgNWFk6o>

A nuclear power plant is simply no place to have a culture of cover-up. And yet, I've heard these sorts of comments from MULTIPLE long-term employees who currently still work at San Onofre. THEY are scared.

If we were talking about a trucking company, or a hospital, or a manufacturer of baby carriages, or a construction company, we would be pretty upset to hear from within the plant itself that there is a "culture of cover-up" at the facility. But where nuclear reactors are concerned, things must be a million times safer, because the risks are about a million times greater for society.

California activists especially should send the URL of this whistleblower's testimony to our elected officials, and to other residents of our beautiful state, so we can keep it that way! Ask them to watch it, and tell them that NOW is the perfect time to shut San Onofre forever!

It really is: Aside from the work ethic problems (which should be reason enough to shut San Onofre), Unit Two is currently shut down anyway, and will be for months. (Unit One was shut down in 1992 when required safety upgrades were deemed too expensive. Even now the reactor pressure vessel and almost all of Unit One's spent fuel still remain at San Onofre, because no one will take them.) Unit Three is due for a long (and expensive) maintenance outage starting next year (2010).

Every day San Onofre remains operating, 500 pounds of new High Level Radioactive Waste is created, on average (250 lbs per reactor per day). Each gram could lay waste to a small city, and will remain dangerous -- and, most importantly, difficult and expensive to handle -- for hundreds of thousands of years.

Virtually all of the hazardous radioactive waste "SONGS" creates each day -- what isn't spilled or leaked into the environment -- sits on our sea coast either in huge "spent fuel pools" or in even-more-dangerous "dry storage casks," which are relatively new and could have been avoided at San Onofre entirely if we had shut the facility down just a few years ago.

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Add: A. Sapountzis (APS)

Both the wet and dry "temporary" radioactive waste storage methods are inadequate, and threaten to destroy our way of life forever in a matter of seconds, from an earthquake, tsunami, act of terrorism, or other tragedy. Don't ever believe the lying scoundrels from the plant, or from government, who say those containments are safe! They are not!

Since we can't shut the plant down yesterday, which would have been better, today will have to do, since tomorrow may be too late. The blackouts when three of California's four nuclear power plants were inoperable in the early part of the century were a hoax. We ALL know that now. We can live just fine without San Onofre as a dangerous and unstable electricity source; a dangerous and unstable neighbor. In fact, we can live BETTER, since renewables wouldn't have to compete with artificially-low-priced nuclear power.

Every nuclear power plant has a "culture of cover-up," as well as numerous other subcultures, power struggles, and political wranglings going on. From giving colorful glossy books to local schools, expressing how "clean and green" nuclear power is, to sending smooth-talking lobbyists to talk to Congressional aides and elected officials (after paving the way with cash donations, often to ALL candidates in various amounts), to being permitted by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to say nothing about any release that is "below regulatory concern" and very little, if anything, about those that are above that nebulous tipping point -- the nuclear power plant's operators hide every possible mistake that occurs, and every potential problem that is created for the future. Why worry about the waste? We'll send it to Yucca Mountain, they've been saying for decades. And now what do they say? We'll reprocess it, they say. Well, that's dirty, too, and would require an additional 100-billion or 200-billion dollars! Really, it will just sit here, dangerously, in ever-increasing amounts. Continuing to make even more radioactive waste is foolhardy.

The entire nuclear industry is based on lies piled on lies: On circular, pointless, and long-winded arguments, on statistical quagmires, on faulty assumptions, on corporate and government secrecy, and on the false hope that really, a little radiation IS always good for you, no matter what your age, no matter what the form of the radiation, no matter how much additional radiation you'll get in your lifetime, and no matter how much "a little" really is (this "theory" is known as "Hormesis").

The scientific and technological world has progressed beyond the craziness of the nuclear industry: Most doctors have learned to avoid unnecessary x-rays, and modern medical procedures almost always expose people to far LESS radiation than, say, 20 years ago. And renewable energy alternatives abound and await public acceptance, such as Atmospheric Vortex Engines. but because society isn't paying close attention (and the topic is so complex), the 104 operating nuclear power plants in America just keep getting older and older and older. And when faced with closure, increased coal use is threatened as the only alternative.

Leaving the plants operating makes a serious accident in America virtually inevitable. We've come close many times. Davis-Besse in 2002 was one recent event -- which went nearly unnoticed by the public. But numerous other events have also occurred. And Three Mile Island's partial meltdown in 1979 could have been a whole lot worse, but in many ways, America was very lucky that day.

After a large accident, surely THEN they will ALL be shut down. But that will be too late. The poisons will have been spread, the death tolls begun, the cancers programmed to occur in our bodies some time in the future.

A smart America won't wait for that. But are we a smart America?

Sincerely,

Ace Hoffman  
Carlsbad, CA

The author develops educational software for colleges and universities. He has studied nuclear issues since the 1970s.

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The NRC thinks it is ready to codify what it takes to make a safe work environment, even while they are failing miserably to do so at San Onofre:  
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It's hard to believe the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has an "expectation that any NRC-regulated organization will establish and maintain a positive safety culture" but apparently they do (see below). And, as always, they think they know what they're doing about everything, and want to be in full control of everything at every nuclear facility. So in the midst of all the fraudulent record-keeping, worker safety violations, lies, and whistleblower accusations at San Onofre and other nuclear power plants, the NRC acts like it knows perfectly well how to achieve a "positive safety culture," and is ready to codify its capabilities into written policy!

Comments are due February 4, 2010.

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NRC seeks public comment on draft safety culture policy for nuclear facilities and nuclear material users

Nov 12, 2009 -- NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS/ContentWorks

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued for public comment a draft policy statement on "safety culture," including the Commission's expectation that any NRC-regulated organization will establish and maintain a positive safety culture.

The Commission addressed the safe conduct of nuclear power plant operations in a 1989 policy statement and a safety-conscious work environment in a 1996 policy statement. After years of work in this area, and after the experience of incorporating aspects of safety culture into the Reactor Oversight Process effort, the Commission has approved issuing a draft policy statement that sets forth its expectation that all licensees and certificate holders establish and maintain a safety culture that protects public health and safety and the common defense and security. The draft policy defines safety culture as: "That assembly of characteristics, attitudes and behaviors in organizations and individuals which establishes that as an overriding priority, nuclear safety and security issues receive the attention warranted by their significance."

A safety culture should include a work environment where personnel feel free to raise safety and security concerns without fearing retaliation, as well as prompt and thorough identification, evaluation and resolution of those concerns. The NRC is strongly committed to promoting a positive safety culture among the organizations it regulates.

The NRC is interested in the public's comments in several areas, including:

\* Does the draft policy's safety culture definition need further clarification? \* What specific safety culture characteristics relevant to particular types of NRC licensees should the draft policy address? \* What characteristics in the draft policy do not contribute to safety culture? \* How can the NRC better involve stakeholders in addressing safety culture?

Comments on the changes will be accepted until Feb. 4, 2010, following publication of the draft safety culture policy statement in the Federal Register, (<<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-26816.pdf>><http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-26816.pdf>). Comments may be mailed to: Alexander Sapountzis, Office of Enforcement, Mail Stop O4 A15A, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission,

Washington, DC 20555-0001, or e-mailed to:

<<http://webmail.americanis.net/imp/message.php?mailbox=INBOX&index=169731#>>[alexander.sapountzis@nrc.gov](mailto:alexander.sapountzis@nrc.gov).

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Ace Hoffman

Author, The Code Killers:

An Expose of the Nuclear Industry

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