



Citizens Committee

For Protection Of The Environment

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914-762-13

January 18, 1972

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To the Editor:

Tuesday marked the beginning of the AEC's hearings on the environmental impact of the Indian Point No. 2 nuclear power plant. The hearings were rapidly adjourned on Wednesday before either Con Edison or the environmental groups could make any presentation. Con Ed's Findings and Conclusions on the Environmental Effects of I.P. #2 are not due until February 8. The only testimony by Con Ed concerned their projected power supply problems for this summer. Once again their vice presidents offered up their usual litany of half-truths and equivocations on the alternative solutions for their poor planning.

More outrageously what did occur on Tuesday was another classic example of the AEC's basic conflict of interest. (Their mission is both the regulation and the promotion of nuclear energy) At this hearing before the commission's Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, a semi-judicial body charged with regulating the "safe" design and operation of a nuclear plant, another regulatory arm of the AEC, the Division of Reactor Licensing (DRL), acting in a purely promotional manner recommended the operation of Indian Point 2 at 50% level! In a 50 page report they have attempted to prejudice the whole environmental issue with a series of faulty cost-benefit equations. In addition they have glossed over the whole radiological safety issue--the repeated failures of the so-called fail-safe systems. In essence the DRL, the body which renders the final licensing recommendation, has made an absolute mockery of the whole hearing proceedings. Like a kangaroo court they have already prejudged the case. The year-long hearings were a mere window dressing--a sop to the concerned public. In this flagrantly irregular action the AEC, like so many of our federal regulatory agencies, has shown its true intent. Instead of regulating for and defending the public interest, it is promoting the interests of the utility companies.

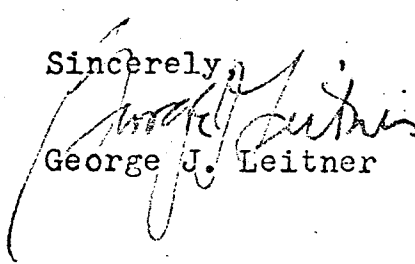
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On October 20, 1971 Dr. James Schlesinger, the new chairman of the AEC, said that the agency's role was now shifted from promoting atomic energy to protecting the public interest in nuclear affairs. It appears that his Division of Reactor Licensing hasn't been listening to the new boss. Once again the AEC is caught in its own credibility gap.

This latest incident makes the separation of the AEC's regulatory and promotional functions all the more urgent. The recent suite against the AEC instituted by six environmental groups including the Cortlandt Conservation Association would force such a separation of powers.

Sincerely,



George J. Leitner

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

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files

TO:

D/Reg

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FOR APPROPRIATE HANDLING

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REMARKS:

58-247

The don't answer letters
addressed to AEC as "cc"
per Rice.

A. W. JACKSON
For the Chairman

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