



May 6, 2010

Nukes Part of the Problem, Not the Solution

NJ Environmental Federation Statement about proposal for fourth nuclear plant in Salem

The NJ Environmental Federation, the state's largest environmental organization with over 100,000 members and 100 member groups, opposes PSE&G's application for a fourth nuclear reactor at the Salem site. As the Garden State Chapter of Clean Water Action, we oppose nuclear power in general because it is unsafe, unsustainable and unnecessary.

NJ Environmental Federation believes that conservation, efficiency and sustainable energy sources such as wind power, solar power, and wave power should be invested in rather than federally subsidizing nuclear energy and fossil fuels. America will never wean itself from unsustainable coal, nuclear and natural gas energy until alternatives are aggressively supported. If the playing field was leveled whether by eliminating all subsidies or providing equal subsidy, wind, solar and efficiency would outcompete nukes and coals every time.

Governor Chrisitie has committed to much more aggressive implementation of the strong goals contained in the 2007 Global Warming Response Act and 2008 Energy Master Plan, e.g., 25% by 2025 Renewable Portfolio Standard and 20% by 2020 Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard. These efforts provide the path to a clean, safe, reliable, green energy future and a 4th plant at Salem is not part of this path.

Specific to Salem/Hope Creek, the existing 3 nuclear plants produce radioactive waste that remains a danger for thousands of years into the future. This nuclear waste has outgrown its spent fuel pools and is now contained in above ground dry cask storage sheds. How much more waste would be produced by a fourth reactor, with no future in site for a permanent safe storage site other than onsite in Lower Alloways Creek?

Further, the safety hazard associated with a malfunction and potential release of toxic radiation into the vicinity of the 3 existing nuclear plants would only be exacerbated by the addition of a fourth plant. Tritium leaks at the Salem Reactors have occurred despite "redundant" safeguards, and are an indication that the safety culture at the plant warrants significant improvement.

Salem 1 and 2 are also huge consumers of water for cooling as well, killing 3 billion fish a year through entrainment and impingement. As part of the Stop the Salem Fish Slaughter/Unplug Salem Coalition" the NJ Environmental Federation has called on PSE&G to install cooling towers at Salem Units 1 and 2 to reduce the cooling water needs and alleviate the fish kill. Since 1995, we have been calling for the installation of cooling towers, to no avail. If PSE&G is not willing to spend the money to install cooling towers and protect the fisheries and estuary of the Delaware River, how are we to trust they will build a safe and environmentally sound fourth nuclear plant?



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Instead of building cooling towers, PSE&G has experimented with a wetland restoration project, built fish ladders, and tinkered with sound deterrents and screen retrofits at the cooling intake structure. Restoring wetlands while admirable will not bring back the annual loss of fish that continues to occur unabated year after year. In the process of restoring wetlands, PSE&G has introduced over 22,000 pounds of herbicide (glyphosate) into the estuary in an attempt to control Phragmites. While it was initially thought that one or two applications of herbicide would control the thousands of acres of Phragmites, it has turned into an annual herbiciding application. As of May, 2010, PSE&G will have been performing annual herbicide applications in **Lower Alloways Creek wetlands for 15 years**, and they plan to extend that spraying even beyond 2010. This is certainly not a sustainable effort if it depends on annual applications of herbicides.

PSE&G has even publicly stated they can't afford to build a 4th plant without massive federal subsidies. PSE&G has made commitments to wind and solar power, and needs to do more in this area instead of proposing a 4th nuclear plant. For all these reasons, we urge 1) PSE&G to withdraw their pursuit of another plant, stop seeking unfair subsidies, comply with the federal Clean Water Act, and accelerate its otherwise laudable renewable and efficiency efforts as well as 2) the appropriate government authorities ensure that this occurs.

Jane Nogaki, Vice Chair

NJ Environmental Federation

223 Park Avenue, Marlton, NJ 08053

janogaki@cleanwater.org; 856-912-6790