

June 17, 2010

To: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
From: Robert F. Howarth, Asheville, NC 28806
Re: Comments on the PROPOSED W.S. LEE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

ECONOMICS:

I believe investing millions of dollars required to bring on line a nuclear power plant is not a good investment. History demonstrates that cost always exceeds initial estimates, financing is dependent on government subsidy in the form of liability insurance, and the 5 to 10 year or more construction time is too long. Other alternative means of power generation can be brought on line in less time, provide many more construction jobs for many more companies, are less risky, do not require large taxpayer liability subsidy, and do not hold the threat to my health, your health, and ecological health posed by operation of nuclear plants and centuries of storing toxic radioactive wastes.

Another compelling reason for my opposition to any more construction of nuclear power plants is well illustrated by comparing them to other available, functional and healthier means of electrical power generation. Comparison in terms of EROEI, that is Energy Return For Energy Invested, reveals that nuclear is 15th out of 20 candidates¹. EROEI, also known as Net Energy, has been defined as “the energy delivered by an energy-obtaining activity compared to the energy required to get it”². That is, there are 14 sources more desirable than nuclear in terms of overall efficiency. This overall efficiency assessment includes a whole system consideration from the extraction at the source, processing, construction and operation of the delivery plant, and cost of any subsequent waste handling and/or disposal. This I believe is looking at the “whole picture” in the way it really is, in an honest way. Furthermore, a comparison in terms of carbon footprint shows Nuclear as having the 3rd highest among the 20 candidates following only Conventional coal and Tar sands³

There is little doubt that we can do better for the health and well being of we taxpayers as well as for the environment than to build Nuclear. The position of short term bottom line profit thinking proponents of Nuclear relies on huge taxpayer supported government subsidies for liability insurance, on a narrowly defined “partial system” efficiency assessment and on refusing to look at the “whole picture” in the way it really is, in an honest way.

¹ The Transition Handbook, Rob Hopkins, P.51; Chelsea Green Publishing, White River Junction, Vermont

² ibid. P. 50

³ ibid. P. 52