

Testimony before the NRC's public meeting on the PSEG application for an
Early Site Permit near Salem, N.J.,
November 4, 2010

My name is Ajax Eastman and I am a founder and past president of the Maryland Conservation Council whose primary purpose is the protection of Maryland's natural resources.

I also am a reformed nuclear energy opponent who has studied all options for our energy future and I have now concluded that nuclear energy is the most reliable, carbon free and least ecologically damaging option available. That is why I am here today to support PSEG's Early Site Permit (ESP). In addition, I urge that the cumulative ecological impacts of alternative energy generating sources be included in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in order to show that by comparison nuclear energy is a far preferable option.

The PSEG Site ESP application, Part 3, environmental reports contains a good analysis of the renewable options compared to the nuclear option. The ESP concludes that the wind turbines, solar thermal power, and photovoltaic technologies, due to the intermittency of the wind and sun are not competitive to the reliability of nuclear power.

I am particularly interested in addressing the biological impacts of renewables, primarily wind. This technology has a huge impact on the biological world. In order to produce an equivalent amount energy, wind requires an enormous footprint. As pointed out in their Environmental Report,..." to replace the energy equivalent a 2200 MWe of nuclear capacity operating at 90 percent capacity factor, approximately 3300 2 MWe wind turbines operating at a capacity factor of 30 percent would be required. These turbines would be sited on 396,000 acres (619 square miles) and disturb 19,800 acres (31 square miles) to accommodate the physical footprint of the towers themselves." (I like the ESP's comparison of that amount of land to 15 times the area of Newark!)

Whether that area is on land or offshore, it is mind boggling to think of potential harm and humongous impacts of industrial wind. On land, particularly in the Appalachian mountains of the east, the 396,000 acres required would destroy the mainly unfragmented, biologically rich forests which are not only habitat for bats and nesting neo-tropical birds, but also

habitat for terrestrial flora and fauna. The area is also a major migratory corridor for birds, bats, and raptors. Yet without full review of the environmental impacts or the costs to taxpayers and customers, permits are being granted. As for impacts offshore, we really can't know the full extent of the harm turbines will have on aquatic resources, benthic organisms, oceanic mammals, or pelagic birds. Where is the precautionary principle in the blind acceptance of and push for such a destructive form of energy?

Another factor to consider in comparing nuclear power to wind is the life expectancy of the turbines. Many of the nuclear reactors in the United States are over 40 years old and are still producing energy at 90 percent capacity, whereas the thousands of turbines being proposed or already built have a life expectancy of only 25 years at a 30 percent capacity.

After reviewing the "Estuary Enhancement Program" by PSEG, I am impressed by their innovative mitigation measures such as wetland restoration, phragmites control, fish protection at the reactor sites, restoration of anadromous fish migration through fish ladders, research, etc. These programs have resulted in long-lasting benefits for the saltwater estuary including, expanded biological diversity and habitats, breeding areas, food sources for aquatic, terrestrial, and avian species, especially threatened and endangered species, and better water quality. This leads me to believe that PSEG will do an excellent job of mitigation in the future.

These factors are a major part of the reason that the Maryland Conservation Council is bucking the trend of most of the major environmental groups in our enthusiastic support of nuclear energy and our opposition to most of the renewable options, particularly wind.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

Ajax Eastman
112 E. Lake Avenue,
Baltimore, MD 21212
410-323-2999
ajaxeast@msn.com