

AP1000DCDCEm Resource

From: Leland D. Randall [lrandallhome@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, May 07, 2011 8:56 AM
To: Rulemaking Comments
Subject: Docket ID NRC-2010-0131: Suspend the AP1000 approval

Dear Secretary Vietti-Cook,

We cannot afford to take any unnecessary risks when building nuclear reactors. Because disaster can occur at any nuclear reactor, the NRC needs to ensure that it has taken all possible precautions before moving forward with the new Westinghouse AP1000 reactor design considered for construction in Georgia, South Carolina and other states.

Especially considering the ongoing crisis in Japan and the review which will take place when the situation is brought under control, the current 75-day public comment period on the reactor design is insufficient for the new AP1000 reactor. I request that the NRC put the license application on hold until a thorough review of the Japanese accident has been conducted and weaknesses in the AP1000 design have been reviewed in light of the accident. To stick with the grossly inadequate 75-day rule making comment period would be the height of irresponsibility by the NRC.

Please accept the petition filed by the twelve environmental organizations of the AP1000 Oversight Group to suspend rule making. To ensure transparency, please include this comment and all others in the formal review proceedings and post them in the NRC's online library so the public can see any expressed concerns.

Addressing safety concerns, not satisfying the industry, should be the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's primary concern. NRC engineer John S. Ma's non-concurrence with the review of the reactor raised the possibility that the AP1000's shield building could shatter "like a glass cup." It would be indefensible for the NRC to move forward without further addressing that weakness. Also, Westinghouse has not satisfactorily proved that the thin steel containment shell over the reactor would be effective during severe accidents or that the reactor could be properly cooled in conditions similar to those at Fukushima.

In a recent (May 1, 2011) piece in the New York Times, Dr. Helen Caldecott stated about the reactor damage at the Fukushima Daiichi plant in Japan that had "any of the containment vessels or fuel pools exploded, it would mean millions of new cases of cancer in the Northern Hemisphere." She also points out that "that there is no such thing as a safe dose of radiation, and that radiation is cumulative. The mutations caused in cells by this radiation are generally deleterious. We all carry several hundred genes for disease: cystic fibrosis, diabetes, phenylketonuria, muscular dystrophy. There are now more than 2,600 genetic diseases on record, any one of which may be caused by a radiation-induced mutation, and many of which we're bound to see more of, because we are artificially increasing background levels of radiation."

She also commented, "As we know from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it takes years to get cancer. Leukemia takes only 5 to 10 years to emerge, but solid cancers take 15 to 60. Furthermore, most radiation-induced mutations are recessive; it can take many generations for two recessive genes to combine to form a child with a particular disease, like my specialty, cystic fibrosis. We can't possibly imagine how many cancers and other diseases will be caused in the far future by the radioactive isotopes emitted by Chernobyl and Fukushima."

"During the 25th anniversary... of the Chernobyl disaster, some commentators asserted that few people died in the aftermath, and that there have been relatively few genetic abnormalities in survivors' offspring. It's an easy leap from there to arguments about the safety of nuclear energy compared to alternatives like coal, and optimistic predictions about the health of the people living near Fukushima.

But this is dangerously ill informed and short-sighted; if anyone knows better, it's doctors like me. There's great debate about the number of fatalities following Chernobyl; the International Atomic Energy Agency has

predicted that there will be only about 4,000 deaths from cancer, but a 2009 report published by the New York Academy of Sciences says that almost one million people have already perished from cancer and other diseases. The high doses of radiation caused so many miscarriages that we will never know the number of genetically damaged fetuses that did not come to term. (And both Belarus and Ukraine have group homes full of deformed children.)"

"Nuclear accidents never cease. We're decades if not generations away from seeing the full effects of the radioactive emissions from Chernobyl."

"Nuclear power is neither clean, nor sustainable, nor an alternative to fossil fuels — in fact, it adds substantially to global warming. Solar, wind and geothermal energy, along with conservation, can meet our energy needs."

It is reckless and irresponsible to promote nuclear energy as a solution of our future energy needs, especially in light of the unresolved Westinhouse AP1000 containment design deficiencies. The risks involved far outweigh any energy produced. Let's learn the lessons from the disaster at Fukushima and cease production of nuclear power plants immediately.

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