

Davis-BesseNPEm Resource

From: Cooper, Paula
Sent: Tuesday, January 11, 2011 1:47 PM
To: Cooper, Paula
Attachments: [Untitled].pdf

Hearing Identifier: Davis_BesseLicenseRenewal_Saf_NonPublic
Email Number: 859

Mail Envelope Properties (7dae76a1-f20c-426b-b959-9e8879a66d2a)

Subject:
Sent Date: 1/11/2011 1:46:38 PM
Received Date: 1/11/2011 1:46:52 PM
From: Cooper, Paula

Created By: Paula.Cooper@nrc.gov

Recipients:
"Cooper, Paula" <Paula.Cooper@nrc.gov>
Tracking Status: None

Post Office: TWMS01.nrc.gov

Files	Size	Date & Time
MESSAGE	2	1/11/2011 1:46:52 PM
[Untitled].pdf	772521	

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Ohio Sierra Club

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Subject: Proposed 20-year operating extension for the Davis Besse nuclear reactor

My name is Patricia Marida and I am the chair of the Nuclear Issues Committee of the Ohio Sierra Club.

The Sierra Club opposes nuclear energy in its entirety, citing serious environmental, health, and public expense issues throughout the nuclear fuel cycle. The time frames needed to guard the radioactive nuclear waste generated from this process are geological in nature. Isolating the radioactive nuclear waste will consume public time and money for generations to come. The only viable solution for radioactive waste is to stop generating it. Radioactive contamination and waste are a major reason to discontinue the use of nuclear power.

The risk and reality is that radioactive contamination has occurred, is occurring and will continue to occur throughout the nuclear power cycle. Mining is leaving radioactive tailings exposed to the air and water on First Nations land in the US, Canada and Australia. Contamination occurs throughout the milling, refining, transport, conversion of uranium to uranium hexafluoride (UF₆), and then enrichment—which in the gaseous diffusion process at Piketon Ohio took as much energy as a large city. Then the fissionable uranium must be formulated into rods. An enormous waste stream is the depleted uranium hexafluoride (DUF₆), which is 99% of the original uranium but is not fissionable and therefore not usable for energy. However, it is just as radioactive and must be deconverted back to the more stable uranium oxide. A newly operating plant at Piketon will take 25 years running round-the-clock to deconvert the 40,000 14-ton canisters of DUF₆ already on the site, not counting how much more will be generated from other enrichment facilities.

Enormous amounts of energy go into this process. Added together along with disposal, these supporting industries cause nuclear power to also come with a heavy carbon price, which means that nuclear power will not address but will worsen global warming.

Centralized electric power, complete with centralized corporate profits for the nuclear and coal industries, has been heavily subsidized by the public for many years. Without public subsidies, loan guarantees and liability limits, for which the public must bear the burden, no nuclear power plant would have ever been built.

In Ohio, the use of electricity has been decreasing for a number of years. Now with progressive legislation like Ohio's SB 221, energy efficiency and conservation, combined with the renewable sources of solar, wind, and geothermal, are providing so much additional and conserved energy that all plans for new coal plants in our state have been cancelled and there is a strong movement to shut down the old polluting coal-fired plants. The argument of US rising energy needs is irrational at best and at worst the resulting global warming would threaten our life-support system, and yes, our "way of life".

There is good reason why there are no new nuclear power plants coming online to replace the old ones. Wall Street will not support them. The enormous up-front costs and 12-20 year length of time for completion makes them financially uncompetitive with wind and solar. And the latter are decentralized, meaning that jobs are being created all over the state. As compared to Davis Besse's extended shutdowns, if the wind stops blowing or the sun is behind a cloud somewhere, there is likely not to be a serious or long-term power shortage problem.