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Consideration of Environmental Impacts of Temporary Storage of Spent Fuel After Cessation of Reactor Operation

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General Comment

See attached file(s)

Attachments

Roger Pelizzari

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Joosten, Sandy

From: Roger Pelizzari [rogerpelizzari108@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 6:38 PM
To: CHAIRMAN Resource
Subject: ATTN: NRC Chairwoman Allison Macfarlane

Dear Chairwoman Macfarlane,

It's obvious that the NRC is trying to rush the environmental assessment of nuclear waste in this country. It has a history of blocking challenges to its licensing of reactors, and keeping public involvement to a bare minimum.

Please for the health of our people, extend environmental scoping period and hold additional live hearings in communities near high-level radioactive waste storage pools and dry casks.

Radioactive waste is one of the most hazardous substances in the world and yet no one has found a safe solution.

We cannot continue to shuffle it from state to state, from people to people.

All licensing should be halted until a safe solution is found.

Below are some uncomfortable facts that explain why I feel so strongly on this issue.

Thank you for listening.

Roger Pelizzari
1000 Purusha Place
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Some uncomfortable facts:

- Nuclear has never been profitable without taxpayer subsidy.
 - The eventual clean up is always horrendous and passed on to the consumer
The lethal legacy of the Atomic Age is a mountain of nuclear waste.
 - In the event of a catastrophe, you can only expect cover-ups and lies from the industry and government who are in bed with each other.
 - The real reason governments want nuclear energy is so can simultaneously build nuclear weapons. And this why nuclear plants are fueled with uranium despite the fact that thorium would be safer. Nuclear weapons technology requires uranium!
 - Ignored Health Issues
Radiation damage to biological tissues has been ignored. Plus, the long-term effects of radiation have been arbitrarily set to zero just because a causal link to future illness has not yet been observed. But as any real scientist knows, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence!
- Of course we can't see the radiation and the nuclear industry does not inform anyone immediately when there is a leak or discharge. But rest assured large quantities of radiation will have a broadly similar effect on marine wildlife as large quantities of oil: it will also spread along the coast and wash up on the beaches exactly the same as oil. However it will not degrade like oil, it will persist and accumulate.
And then what about the effects on oceanic evaporation and the planetary rain cycle and the fact that the level of background radiation continues to rise.
- High Cost
Every serious projection on the planet shows solar PV as being cheaper than fossil fuel plants within 6 to 10 years if current rapid falls in costs are maintained. Solar PV costs per watt have fallen 16% in the last 7 months alone. Nuclear costs have continued to rise.
 - Definitely NOT a low carbon option
Nuclear is only a reasonably low carbon option if it completes its operational life. But it does not! It is compromised by major component replacement every 20 years or so. The main emissions occur up front by the construction, which usually endures for 10 years.
- The calculations need constant revising upward because all the materials of construction are subject to lowering ore grades and increased energy for retrieval of oil and gas needed to fuel the manufacture of the equipment. In any case steel can only be made from the reduction of iron ore by coal and there is insufficient scrap to have much electric arc. The emissions up front are never fully compensated for, given the delays and problems.

An incident like TMI, Chernobyl or Fukushima tends to set any climate alleviation prospects aside, when the clean-up costs and loss of productive land are considered.

Those who point to French nuclear technology as a success, please take note.

In July 2008, 18,000 litres (4,755 Gallons) of Uranium solution containing natural uranium were accidentally released from Tricastin Nuclear Power Center. Testing found elevated uranium levels in the nearby Gaffière and Lauzon rivers. The liquid that escaped to the ground contained about 75kg of unenriched uranium which is toxic as a heavy metal while possessing only slight radioactivity. French authorities have banned the use of water from the Gaffière and Lauzon for drinking and watering of crops. Swimming, water sports and fishing were also banned. This incident has been classified as Level 1 on the International Nuclear Event Scale. Again in July 2008, approximately 100 employees were exposed to radioactive particles that escaped from a pipe in a reactor that had been shut down. Just level 1 incidents, but proof that the French technology is not fool-proof.

Do you think the proponents of nuclear energy plants in the US and Russia thought the safeguards used in those plants (which resulted in Chernobyl, Three Mile Island disasters) were any less safe than what you believe France's current technology to be? The chair of the investigation into the Three Mile Island disaster, John Kemeny, said: "The plants are safe; it's the people who aren't." The bottom line: Can anyone guarantee the safety of these enormously poisonous nuclear wastes for 10,000 years?

We all want our nations to be able to meet their energy needs, but not all that glitters is gold. Progress is good but we need to do the right thing at this critical juncture. Nuclear is NOT the right thing.

ALL Nuclear Power Plants are nuclear disasters waiting to happen, simply because of mechanical and materials deterioration and human error. Hundreds more nuclear power plants are planned, especially by developing countries anxious to reduce their energy dependencies on fossil fuels. Of course, that will mean increasingly huge amounts of radioactive iodine 131 into the atmosphere and huge quantities of nuclear waste begging for safe disposal. Simpler of course, would be to boil water with solar mirrors. All nuclear power plants so far are just fancy water boilers.

Some Recent History

Before the 11th of September the nuclear power industry was salivating at the prospect of the government giving it limited liability for the risks of the meltdown or other nuclear accident. We were told by Vice President Cheney that nuclear power was a "safe technology" that could help alleviate energy shortages and not contribute to greenhouse gases.

But when Dick Cheney invited the energy companies and their lobbyists to write his energy plan, he didn't reckon on terrorism or the advice of Harvey Wassermann. Harvey Wassermann has spent years studying these issues and writing about America's experience with atomic radiation. He tells us that one or both planes that crashed into the World Trade Center could easily have obliterated the two atomic reactors now operating at Indian Point, about 40 miles up the Hudson River.

Regulations put out by the nuclear regulatory commission regarding plant safety don't address that sort of event, and neither plant was designed to withstand such crashes. Until now Harvey Wassermann's scenario was unthinkable. Had one or both of those jets hit one or both of the operating reactors at Indian Point, the ensuing cloud of radiation would have dwarfed the ones at Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Three Mile Island, and Chernobyl. At the very least, the massive impact and hellish jet fuel fire would destroy the human ability to control the plants' functions. Vital cooling systems, back-up power generators, and communications networks would crumble. The assault would not require a large jet. The safety systems are extremely complex and virtually indefensible. One or more could be wiped out with a wide range of easily deployed small aircraft, ground-based weapons, truck bombs, or even chemical/biological assaults aimed at the operating work force.

Dozens of U.S. reactors have repeatedly failed even modest security tests over the years. And even heightened wartime standards cannot guarantee protection of the vast, supremely sensitive controls required for reactor safety. Without continuous monitoring and guaranteed water flow, the thousands of tons of radioactive rods in the cores and the thousands more stored in those fragile pools would rapidly melt into super-hot radioactive balls of lava that would burn into the ground and the water table and, ultimately, the Hudson. Striking water, they would blast gigantic billows of horribly radioactive steam into the atmosphere. The radioactive clouds would then enshroud New York, New Jersey, New England, and carry deep into the Atlantic and up into Canada and across to Europe and around the globe again and again.

The immediate damage would render thousands of the world's most populous and expensive square miles permanently uninhabitable. All five boroughs of New York City would be an apocalyptic wasteland. All real estate and economic value would be poisonously radioactive throughout the entire region. Who knows how many people would die? As at Three Mile Island, where thousands of farm and wild animals died in heaps, and as at Chernobyl, where soil, water and plant life have been hopelessly irradiated, natural ecosystems on which human and all other life depends would be permanently and irrevocably destroyed; spiritually, psychologically, financially, ecologically, our nation would never recover.

This is what we missed by a mere forty miles near New York City on September 11th. And remember, there are 103 of these potential bombs of the apocalypse now operating in the United States.