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General Information

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Date Response
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RES to coordinate with NRR on a response to Question 6.

Document Information

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Addressee: Chairman Macfarlane
Incoming Task: E-mail OEDO POC: Diane Jackson

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ACTION OFFICE: EDO

AUTHOR: Dr. Roger Prof. Johnson
AFFILIATION: CA
ADDRESSEE: CHRM Allison Macfarlane
SUBJECT: Provides questions in regards to the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station

ACTION: Direct Reply
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LETTER DATE: 01/03/2013

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Joosten, Sandy

From: r johnson [r66nj@yahoo.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 13, 2013 4:29 PM
To: CHAIRMAN Resource
Subject: Letter for Dr. Macfarlane regarding visit to San Onofre

Dr. Allison Macfarlane
Chair, Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Jan. 13, 2013

Dear Dr. Macfarlane:

Originally I was supposed to be one of those meeting with you tomorrow during your visit here. A few days ago, the NRC cut the number of people allowed to attend so I am writing to you here with my concerns about the reopening of the San Onofre NPP.

A concern shared by many in this area relates to the possibility that operating a nuclear reactor in a densely populated area may be causing cancer and other health issues. Historically, the NRC has relied on a 1990 National Cancer Institute study which failed to find cancer streaks near nuclear power plants. Scientists now regard this study as invalid and instead they point to two more recent and more carefully conducted epidemiological studies that I assume you are familiar with. The German KiKK study can be found here: <http://pgs.ca/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/Childhood-Leukemia-and-Cancers-Near-German-Nuclear-Reactos.pdf> and the French study link is: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ijc.27425/full>

It is commendable that the NRC seeks to revisit the issue by funding a new epidemiological study to be carried out by the National Academy of Sciences.

Since the NRC has a vested interest in arriving at the same conclusion as the 1990 NCI study, and since the study will be funded and possibly influenced by the desires of the NRC, many are questioning the independence of this investigation and whether the public can trust the results. Indications of this were quite apparent when the NRC commented to reporters following its Oct. 23, 2012 press release. NRC spokespersons speculated about the results several years from now and stated that they expected to find no cancer effects. To many, this indicated that the study is biased before it even begins. I am therefore asking if you will respond to several questions below and provide assurance that the new NAS epidemiological study (at San Onofre and the other five NPP) will be completely independent. I would appreciate it if you would respond to me at the contacts below and also make you responses public.

1. Will the NRC agree not to be involved in any way in the selection of scientists and staff members for this study? This assurance would include nominations, recommendations, interviews, and selection of all personnel as well as the avoidance of any written or informal exchanges with the NAS.
2. Will the NRC agree not to be involved in any way in the scope or design of the study? That would mean that the NAS methods and procedures will be carried out without any kind of input or review by the NRC.
3. Will the NRC agree not to be involved in any way in the analysis or interpretation of data? This would mean that the NRC would have no advance knowledge of the results before they are made public and that the NRC would not be involved in any way in the writing of the report or its conclusions.
4. If the NAS indeed fails to find any cancer effects, will the NRC refrain from placing an unscientific spin on the data by claiming that such results prove that NPP do not cause cancer? As a scientist, I am sure you know that researchers can never prove the null hypothesis. If no statistically significant effects are found, the only possible conclusion is that the study failed to find an effect. It would not prove that there are no effects.
5. Since the NRC has already chosen to speculate that nothing will be found, may I ask you to speculate on what the NRC position would be if a cancer effect is discovered? Obviously this pilot study would

have to be expanded but that is not the reply I am seeking. The results of this study will probably not be available until 2015, and if further research is recommended it is possible that the issue could be tied up until the next decade. If there is a cancer effect, what are the policy implications for the future of nuclear power? People (especially children) may have been suffering from NPP emissions for decades already and it would be unconscionable not to take action, especially since the charge of the NRC is to protect public safety.

6. As a follow-up on the important issue of public safety, may I quote from the NRC Mission Statement which says the mission of the NRC is “...to ensure the adequate protection of public health and safety, promote the common defense and security, and to protect the environment.” This clearly means that the NRC is charged with all safety aspects of nuclear power plants especially including public health and protection of the environment. Instead of addressing these issues, the public has seen the NRC avoid such issues. For example, all the NRC hearings in this area have been narrowly focused on engineering questions, the assumption being that nuclear power plants are automatically “safe” if it can be shown that the engineering designs are correct. At the start of each meeting, an NRC spokesman states clearly that they will not entertain any questions other than technical questions about nuclear engineering. There are at least a dozen major questions of nuclear power plant safety, and the NRC restricts all discussion to only one: engineering. When will the NRC hold hearings about public health or environmental contamination? When will it hold hearings about seismic dangers? (I hope you read the new report a few days ago in which scientists now say that fault lines in California may connect and cause a megaquake: <http://articles.latimes.com/2013/jan/09/science/la-sci-big-earthquakes-20130110>) Why does the NRC ignore important safety issues related waste storage, terrorism, human error, sabotage, and other issues which could make nuclear power plants unsafe? If the NRC does not wish to deal with its charge of public safety, please tell me what other government agencies are authorized to regulate the nuclear power industry.

Sincerely yours,