

October 7, 2013

US Nuclear Regulatory Commission:
Secretary
Commissioners
Waste Confidence Directorate

RE: Public Comment on the GEIS on Waste Confidence, NUREG 2157, and proposed Waste Confidence Rule, 10CFR51

FROM:

Nuclear Information and Resource Service, Physicians for Social Responsibility;
Shut Down Indian Point Now; Redwood Alliance; Safe and Green Campaign;
Nuclear Energy Information Service; Citizens' Environmental Coalition; Terra Foundation;
Peace Resource Center; Environmentalists Inc; Uranium Watch; Alliance for a Green Economy;
Green State Solutions; peakchoice.org; SAFE Carolinas; Ecological Options Network, EON
Michigan Stop the Nuclear Bombs Campaign; Alliance For A Clean Environment; Citizens'
Environmental Coalition; CAN; VCAN; Stand Up/Save Lives Campaign; Crabshell Alliance;
Toledo Coalition for Safe Energy.

Dear Commission and Staff:

Under NEPA and NRC regulations, we represent concerned members of the public from whom the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is seeking comments on the NRC Staff's Draft "Generic Environmental Impact Statement on Waste Confidence." On September 4, 2013 we were informed of a series of public comment meetings on the vital matter of the highly radioactive waste resulting from nuclear energy would be received by NRC staff. In addition, these meetings are to assist the public in preparing written comments. Nine days later a Federal Register notice officially launched the comment period for NUREG 2157 and the new proposed Waste Confidence rule, an amendment to 10CFR51. Historically, our organizations' outreach and public education has provided NRC with a strong comment record under NEPA.

We understand that it is circumstances beyond the control of the NRC (federal shutdown) which has resulted in a disruption of the public comment plans, however we ask for consideration of the fact that uncertainty **greatly** hinders the ability to mobilize our organizations and members of the public to attend the hearings. As NRC makes plans for how to proceed in the face of the disruption of this already-noticed comment period we request the following:

- All meetings be held, at either the original date or on a new one with the following provisions:
 - Due to considerable investment in outreach for each of the meetings, we ask a 10-day cancellation notice be given prior to a meeting being canceled
 - A thirty day notice be given for any re-scheduled or newly scheduled meeting
- NRC provide for a large printed placard stating that the NRC has canceled the meeting be placed at each venue where a meeting is not being held on the date originally planned and that it include information on how to find out about re-scheduling (NRC web site/phone

number). If people miss a cancellation message and do not even have acknowledgement of cancellation at the venue, they could be less likely to participate in the future.

- There be no meetings scheduled during the holiday period of December 15 -- January 5.
- The written comment period be extended to a new ending date, no sooner than 30 days after the last public comment meeting, but also to not fall in the holiday period.
- That transparency and participation at these meetings be increased, not decreased, and that every public meeting include a phone bridge and opportunity to listen and comment via the phone, not only those at Headquarters. Due to consideration of NRC staff response to this request, we note that we are dropping the request for video interface outside of Rockville, but do feel that a phone bridge is no a big deal, and should be provided.
- Agree to accept (short) public comments on video from those who cannot attend as part of the official comment period.

It was not clear that the first 2 hearings (Rockville and Denver) would be held even though it was clear that the government was shuttering. That left only a day or two to mobilize people who were under the impression that NRC would also shutdown. Likewise the 2 California hearings were not officially cancelled until the previous business day! On Friday, October 4th it was made public that the Monday Oct 7th and Wednesday October 9th hearings would not take place! Not everyone planning to attend is on the NRC's notification email list. This same scenario could play out throughout the series of hearings, with notices going into newsletters or announcements to recipients who may not hear about the cancellations.

We are aware of the NRC desire to complete the Waste Confidence rulemaking "on schedule" -- a schedule developed with its applicants and licensees. Our concern, which has already been raised in the past, is that we support the staff doing a much more thorough analysis than can be accomplished on the short schedule, and so view the participation of our communities in this process as vital and the provision of the public meetings as key to that participation. The meetings will, however be merely a sham if there is no way to know if the meeting is happening or not in sufficient time for people with jobs, families and other commitments to make plans. Thank you for this opportunity to participate, we hope NRC will remain committed to it being a meaningful engagement for all.

Sincerely,

Mary Olson
Nuclear Information and Resource Service, Southeast
Asheville, NC

Diane D'Arrigo
Nuclear Information and Resource Service
Takoma Park, MD

Catherine Thomasson, MD
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Washington, DC

Michael Welch
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Ann Darling
Safe and Green Campaign
Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts

David A. Kraft, Director
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Citizens' Environmental Coalition
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Linda Seeley
Terra Foundation
San Luis Obispo, CA.

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Crabshell Alliance
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Mary Beth Brangan
Ecological Options Network, EON
Bolin CA

Remsburg, Kristy

From: Mary Olson <maryo@nirs.org>
Sent: Monday, October 07, 2013 5:17 PM
To: WCO Outreach Resource; rulemaking.comments@nrc.com; CHAIRMAN Resource; CMRSVINICKI Resource; CMRAPOSTOLAKIS Resource; CMRMAGWOOD Resource; CMROSTENDORFF Resource; Julian, Emile
Cc: Lopas, Sarah; Chip Cameron; Diane Curran
Subject: Request for Extension on Waste Confidence Rulemaking Comment Period and Civility in Conduct of Public Meetings
Attachments: WasteCON-extension.pdf

Please see attached letter.

Thank you so much for your attention to this matter, given the circumstances which are, obviously, beyond your control.

If you have any questions or other need for communication, please contact:

Diane D'Arrigo
dianed@nirs.org
301-270-6477 ex 15

(I will be on leave for the next week.)

THANK YOU,

Mary Olson
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NIRS functions as a networking / information clearing house on nuclear energy and its radioactive waste. Working for a non-nuclear energy policy since 1978.