

Rulemaking1CEm Resource

From: RulemakingComments Resource
Sent: Friday, October 25, 2013 8:42 AM
To: Rulemaking1CEm Resource
Subject: FW: Protect our communities from radioactive waste!

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TITLE: Waste Confidence—Continued Storage of Spent Nuclear Fuel
COMMENT#: 00062

-----Original Message-----

From: Sierra Club [<mailto:information@sierraclub.org>] On Behalf Of Gary Chrisler
Sent: Sunday, September 22, 2013 9:27 PM
To: RulemakingComments Resource
Subject: Protect our communities from radioactive waste!

Sep 22, 2013

Allison McFarlane

Dear McFarlane,

I am a retired power systems engineer, with 4+ years working at G.E.'s Nuclear Energy Business Group (NEBG) among the accomplishments of my career. I am writing to you because I am concerned about how we store our most hazardous waste, the radioactive fuel rods from nuclear reactors. We should not license or re-license any reactor until it has been proven that we can successfully isolate this waste.

I am also aware of substantial upgrades in plant safety and reliability, reactant toxicity, fuel divertability, with remarkable reductions in both overall waste and the waste's half-life, substantially reducing long-term waste safe storage requirements. I refer to designs like G.E.'s PRISM thorium molten-salt reactor. Why are designs that have demonstrated severe catastrophic capability being proposed for new construction? Why aren't safer and less toxic designs considered?

While we are working on the solution, I am also concerned that many of our nuclear reactors have overcrowded fuel pools on site. These present safety threats to the communities and industries that surround the plants. The NRC should take immediate action to reduce the number of fuel assemblies in the water-filled pools. Before transferring the fuel rods to cask storage, the cask storage needs to be examined and reinforced to be able to safely store the fuel rods particularly those that qualify as high burn up fuel. Hardened on-site storage of the casks should become the choice for storage.

I am also concerned about the sustainability of nuclear power. The EIS needs to evaluate the true costs of nuclear power after the subsidies are stripped away. The long-term costs of decommissioning need to be considered as well. The ongoing costs to US taxpayers should be transparent in this EIS.

Finally, I am dismayed that significant upgrades to reactor safety and waste reduction have been made, but are not being applied to designs proffered for approval in the attempted resurgence of conventional nuclear

technology. Why are designs such as the thorium molten salt reactor, which runs on a less-toxic, nonexplosive reactant, has "walk-away safe shutdown" operation, that produces 99% less waste, and the waste with a half-life of 300 years vs 168,000, why hasn't there been a serious effort to license and promote such improvements?

The single fact of 300-year half-life versus 168,000 is a complete game changer, because a structure or containment lasting the better part of a million years is simply not feasible. It is impossible to ensure reliability over timespans like that. But waste repositories safeguarding waste for 1200 or 1500 years CAN be constructed. We know how to do that, we've built structures that have lasted that long. To want to build more units designed in the era of the Fukushima reactors is demonstrably unwise. Why risk contaminating an entire region for a million years when you don't have to? Pursue better alternatives.

Sincerely,

Gary Chrisler
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