

WCRM-GEIS1CEm Resource

From: Sierra Club [information@sierraclub.org] on behalf of Toni Francis [tonifrancis@comcast.net]
Sent: Sunday, September 22, 2013 11:25 PM
To: RulemakingComments Resource
Subject: Protect our communities from radioactive waste!

Sep 22, 2013

Allison McFarlane

Dear McFarlane,

It seems painfully obvious to me that nuclear energy is not a safe, clean, or economical energy source. The disaster at Fukushima, Japan, underscores that reality. However, I realize it will be with us at least for a while longer so I am writing you today to express my grave concern about how we store our most hazardous waste, the radioactive fuel rods from our reactors. We should not license or re-license any reactor until it has been proven that we can successfully isolate this waste.

While we are working on that problem, I am also concerned that many of our nuclear reactors have over-crowded 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.

However, the bottom line is that nuclear power is not sustainable. The Environmental Impact Statement (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, the EIS must choose the option of not making any nuclear waste at all in the future, by comparing the environmental footprint of nuclear, from mining to long term waste disposal, to that of renewables and energy efficiency. There is simply no way to justify continued use of nuclear as an energy source, given the extreme hazards from reactor failures, climate disasters, potential terrorist attacks, and risks resulting from the transport and storage of nuclear waste.

We never should have embarked on this nuclear energy adventure in the first place, since we lacked (and still lack) the means to safely operate these plants or dispose of their spent fuel. But hindsight is 20/20. The only responsible course now is to abandon nuclear as an energy source and do everything we can to ensure the rapid and safe decommissioning of current reactor sites.

Sincerely,

Toni Francis
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