

CHAIRMAN Resource

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Sent: Saturday, January 16, 2016 1:23 AM
To: CHAIRMAN Resource; Senator Boxer
Subject: [External_Sender] Fwd: [ShutSanOnofre] Oceanside's Kern on drive to get radioactive waste out of San Onofre

FYI

Remember it's in southern California Edison's DNA to lie --

Subject: [ShutSanOnofre] Oceanside's Kern on drive to get radioactive waste out of San Onofre

http://www.seasidecourier.com/news/oceanside-s-kern-on-drive-to-get-radioactive-waste-out/article_879c5810-bbb7-11e5-a3c8-5fb9cf70da12.html

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Oceanside's Kern on drive to get radioactive waste out of San Onofre

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Oceanside City Councilman Jerry Kern

Posted: Friday, January 15, 2016 10:41 am

by Thomas K. Arnold



by **Thomas K. Arnold**

Oceanside City Councilman Jerry Kern is on a mission: To get highly radioactive nuclear waste from the now-defunct San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station moved to Texas.

The plant, owned by Southern California Edison, was shut down in 2013 following the failure of replacement steam generators. But the nuclear waste remained — about 3.6 million pounds of it.

San Diego County supervisors in September approved a resolution asking the U.S. Department of Energy, along with other officials, that the spent fuel be removed from the San Onofre plant as soon as possible.

A month later, the California Coastal Commission made a similar request, but at the same time voted unanimously to give Southern California Edison a 20-year permit for an expanded nuclear waste storage facility after the utility complained that the current 14-year-old storage area is nearing capacity.

SCE said it needs up to 80 more steel-and-concrete-encased canisters for additional dry storage. Most of San Onofre's spent fuel is stored in steel-lined, concrete storage pools, in what's called wet storage. The utility has a contract with Holtec International to partially bury more than 2,668 fuel assemblies that are currently sitting in cooling ponds, and the Coastal Commission gave the utility the green light because it felt it's better to have the waste buried in the ground than floating in pools — even though the canisters would be 100 feet from the ocean and just above the water table.

Environmental groups quickly protested the decision, saying it makes no sense to store the spent fuel right next to the ocean in an area prone to earthquakes.

And in November former San Diego City Attorney Mike Aquirre's law firm filed a lawsuit to get the California Coastal Commission to revoke the permit to expand on-site storage of the millions of pounds of nuclear waste.

Kern wants to muster up some muscle to get the waste out of San Onofre, less than 20 miles north of the city he represents. He's already gotten his colleagues on the Oceanside City Council to approve an ordinance supporting a proposed federal law that would allow interim storage of nuclear waste until a permanent disposal site is found.

The proposed law, co-sponsored by Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Vista, would allow spent nuclear fuel currently being stored in highly populated, geographically vulnerable areas — such as Southern California — to be moved to a temporary storage site.

No permanent storage site for nuclear waste currently exists. A site on federal land at Yucca Mountain, about 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas, was approved by Congress in 2002, but a public outcry prevented what was to be called the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository, a deep geological repository, from being built before funding ran out in 2011.

Kern, who serves on SCE's San Onofre Community Engagement Panel, is lining up support from other North County cities to push for interim storage. No temporary holding sites have been established yet, but companies are exploring possibilities in Texas and New Mexico, northeast of El Paso.

"The consolidated interim storage sites are located in a remote desert with which is thinly populated and has very stable ground," Kern said. "The sites also eliminate the long threat of saltwater intrusion that is posed at San Onofre because of sea-level rise."

Kern spoke before the Carlsbad City Council on Tuesday and was told the city had to evaluate it to see if it fits into their current policies. The next night, he spoke before the Encinitas City Council and was told the issue would be put on the Jan. 27 agenda for a vote.

Kern still has to schedule an appearance before the Vista City Council.

In his pitch to North County cities, Kern says, "I am here to ask for your support in removing the spent nuclear fuel from the closed facility. Despite the recommendations of the 2012 Blue Ribbon Commission Report, the U.S. government has made no substantial progress toward permanent, or even temporary, consolidated storage of used civilian nuclear fuel. In the United States, more than 65,000 tons of spent nuclear fuel from commercial reactors currently sits on-site in temporary storage, including at roughly 61 still-operating nuclear power plants (99 units) and 14 shutdown reactor sites. Around 2,000 more tons is accumulating every year. This failure of government to act has littered communities across the nation with high level nuclear waste stored in less than ideal conditions, including at the now-defunct San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station.

"It was not supposed to be this way. The 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act bound the federal government by law to take custody of all civilian waste from power companies for final disposal, under the assumption that the waste would be permanently stored in a deep geological repository at Nevada's Yucca Mountain and overseen by the Department of Energy. The Act obligated the U.S. government to begin accepting waste by 1998, but the government was unable to fulfill this promise, forcing the utility companies to store the waste and assume liability. This situation cannot continue.

"HR3643, which is co-sponsored by Congressman Issa, is a solution to this problem. It changes the law to allow the Department of Energy to take ownership of the fuel when it is transferred to a consolidated interim storage facility instead of only taking possession when it goes to a permanent storage facility. I am asking that you please agendize this for a council meeting in the near future in order for you to pass this resolution."

Kern, who is a candidate for the 76th Assembly District seat currently occupied by Rocky Chavez, a former Oceanside city councilman, plans on taking this campaign to the state Legislature.

"We currently have a very narrow window of opportunity," Kern told the Seaside Courier. "If we miss it the waste fuel will more than likely remain stranded, not only at San Onofre, but also at scores of other sites across California and the nation."

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