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Agency Activities in Response to a Portion of the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act

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Agency Activities in Response to a Portion of the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act

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Submitter Information

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General Comment

My name is Jim Baumstark and I am a resident of Crystal River FL. I am requesting a Public Meeting be held in Crystal River/Citrus County regarding community engagement for decommissioned nuclear plants in accordance with the NEIMA of 2019.

My background: I am a Naval Academy graduate who served 28 years in the Navy Nuclear Power Program, commanding two nuclear submarines, USS Lapon (SSN 661) and USS Michigan (SSBN 727) (Gold), during the Cold War. Following my military retirement in 1992, I spent 15 years in the nuclear power industry, working at nuclear plants in TN (TVA, Sequoyah), FL (Florida Power, Crystal River 3) and Con Edison (Indian Point 2). I retired as a VP from ConEd in 2007.

Returning to live in Florida in 2009, I was disappointed when Duke Power decided to shutdown CR-3 in 2013 rather than repair it. I was further disappointed when two nuclear plants they had announced they would build in nearby Levy county were cancelled. Subsequent events have indicated that the owner of CR3 has literally walked away from any responsibilities to the local community and surrounding county, negatively impacting local residents and businesses. It represents an example of 'worst-case practices' that 'best-case practices' can be compared against.

Crystal River is a small community (pop-3300) on the Gulf of Mexico in Citrus County (pop-145,000), about 90 miles W of Orlando and 70 miles N of Tampa, not within easy commuting distance from either city. Since

it began operations in 1976, CR3 was the undisputed powerhouse driving the local economy, employing some 600 workers averaging \$100K/yr (or \$60M annually). CR3 was replaced last year by 2 cogen plants, employing 70 workers averaging \$70K/year, a loss of disposable income of \$55M/yr. As a direct result, the county raised property taxes 31% and let go some 100 county workers. Big box stores (Sears, JC Penney, Belks, and K--Mart) were soon long gone and local business strip malls are now mostly vacant. Further, just before CR3 closed, the number of county residents below the poverty level was 43%, by 2017 that number was above 50% and climbing.

The effect of CR3's closure impacted the entire Tampa Bay region. In 2014, a year following closure, the region saw its GDP drop 7,5%, the largest loss in the 382 metro areas in the US Commerce Department's annual report. Writing in the Tampa Bay Times, business columnist Robert Trigaux stated "...only now are we starting to realize the profound impact of closing a nuclear plant before its time."

Other communities have benefitted from support generated by proactive actions:

- In Sept '18, PG&E was directed by California's Governor to provide \$85M to San Luis Obispo County in impact funds to offset the 2025 closure of Diablo Canyon.
- In Jan '19, Entergy, owner of Pilgrim plant outside Boston, agreed to pay the town of Plymouth \$13M as a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (or PILOT) agreement over FY20-21.
- The State of New York has \$56M in its Electric Generation Facility Cessation Mitigation Program to help towns like Cortland and Buchanan accommodate the loss of the 2 Indian Point plants. which will shut down in the next 5 years.

Unlike these plants, no economic or community funds or PILOT agreements have been made available to Crystal River or Citrus County.

In 2013, the Citrus County Economic Development Council commissioned a 5-year Strategic Economic Development Plan, using funds provided by the plant owner. It did not include an economic impact study of the plant's closure. Published in Dec '13, it had 16 goals, each with action plans and implementation strategies. Total cost of implementing the plan was \$2.3M thru 2018. The plan has not been routinely updated and, to date, no economic impact study of the plant's shutdown has been conducted

In summary, the owner of CR3 has walked away from socio-economic damage caused by the closure of the plant. No responsibility or accountability has been assigned. No continuing long term efforts have been made by the owner, despite the efforts of other US nuclear plant owners in similar situations, albeit some because of other actions initiated by local, state, and federal legislators.