

POOR ORIGINAL

3514 Burnbridge
Sacramento, Calif. 95815,
June 14, 1979.

Harold R. Denton,
Director of Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation,
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission,
Washington, D.C. 20555.

Joseph M. Herdick

Dear Mr. Denton,

I am writing to you this urgent appeal to give the Go Ahead for the Sacramento Municipal Utility District to put the Rancho Seco plant back into operation at the earliest possible moment. The reason---Northern California is having the start of what the weather people say will be one of the hottest summers in many years---here in the Central Valley the temperatures have climbed some days over 100 degrees and we may have some going as high as 112 degrees---and we are woefully short of power.

Under the leadership of Board President William B. Baird, a hard nosed, no nonsense business man who has lived in Sacramento for many years and heads up one of the largest lumber companies; William Walbridge, the General Manager of the District; and John Mattinee, a very capable electrical engineer, SMUD has made all the changes required by your commission, and some not required, to make this plant as safe as those on our nuclear powered submarines, cruisers and aircraft carriers and instituted an employee training program that will guard against human error in the operation of the plant.

Your Commission also has a nuclear engineer on the site. With time running out on Power Sources in Northern California, Rancho Seco is needed like never before. All over California and particularly here in the Capital City of California thousands of new homes, office buildings, stores and many other types of commercial buildings have been built in the last three years, not to mention updating many older ones, all adding a drain on the already overtaxed power supplies. Unless Rancho Seco and Mount Diablo are allowed to operate, a freeze must be put on all new buildings and homes---a hard blow to the economy and jobs.

Before becoming a General Building Contractor here, I worked for more than 24 years with Pacific Gas & Elec. Co. in the Sacramento Division. Early in the 1930's we switched from crude oil to natural gas for the fuel to fire the furnaces in the power plants that provided back-up power to the big hydro power plants of PG&E. Then came the natural gas shortage and back to oil again. Now oil is expensive and hard to come by and even a barrel not used for making electricity can be used to make diesel or gasoline. Short supplies of all fuel may bring on a depression that may be as disastrous as the one that started in 1929 and did not end until just before the start of World War II.

The old USS Nautilus slid into San Francisco Bay last week to be decommissioned after 30 more or less accident free of its nuclear power plant. Renton, Washington, has a nuclear plant with a lot of years of accident free service behind it. With the changes that have been made and with care a good training and top supervision of all personnel Rancho Seco should pose none of the threats to humans as claimed by the "kukes" who streamed here from the Cappuses at U.C. Davis, Berkeley. Thousands of permits, red tape, "hearings" no coal or oil plants have even gotten off the ground in California---solar power is still not an affordable alternative---so only nuclear is left. Blackouts, brownouts, job losses, losses in spoiled meats and produce, makes it imperative that Rancho Seco, now read to go, be turned loose to operate.

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I talked to Governor Jerry Brown's Energy Secretary this morning and told him that Aero-Jet General Corporation's Rocket Plant has chemists, Eugene Vander Wall in charge, who have taken samples of the liquid waste from nuclear power plants and reduced it to a dry powder, in appearance not unlike your favorite laundry detergent. It is perfectly dry, won't absorb moisture, will not burn or explode, has almost no detectable rays, and can be stored safely in steel containers, the stuff not eating into the metal. He said he would relay this information to Governor Brown who has been making a "big thing" of this liquid waste material. Vander Wall said any samples your "in residence" nuclear engineer at Rancho Seco, (he was sure) could send him would be processed to show your Commission that the way to make nuclear waste safe can be accomplished. Aero-Jet hopes to sell the process to all of the nuclear power plants in the nation and perhaps overseas. No charge would be made for the test.

I was with PG&E in 1947 when we sold the SMUD the lines and equipment in Sacramento County which now makes up the SMUD area for about \$11,000,000. SMUD was to buy most of its power from the U.S. Central Valleys Project and PG&E providing a back-up. Population zoomed in California, especially here, and SMUD had to build a couple of Hydro Plants which have done very well. This still was not enough and at the urging of the U.S. Government, The State Government of Calif the local newspapers, local political entities, etc., the District (SMUD) was pushed into building the "Thing That Was The Real McCoy", the power of the future, an atomic power plant.

Now SMUD owes about One Billion Dollars---not a big amount to the Federal People, but a hell of a lot for a district of about 750,000 people to pay off through the revenue that must come from their power bills. It can easily be paid off in Rancho Seco runs---and it did very well a number of years---so the figures on the ledgers of the Utility District were nice black ones---now the red figures to the tune of \$20,000 a day in wages and other expense such as guards, etc., as personnel draws its pay in full, even though shut down, are showing up. Loss of power revenue from the plant exceeds \$75,000 a day.

All the protestors who want a "hearing" (there have been plenty of hearings so far) are the ones who want to shut down all nuclear plants. Practically none live in the SMUD area and are from dissident student groups and left wing teachers who have little of monetary interest. Thousands of illegal immigrants and "boat people" are being dumped into California every year, all using electricity. A moratorium on all building will soon have to be enacted if nuclear plants, safe though they are and getting safer all the time, aren't allowed to operate. The State of California has thousands in local offices without opening windows that can't operate if the brownouts and blackouts come.

Thanks,
Harry H. Winkle
Harry H. Winkle

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Summer power supplies will be tight, everyone's help saving energy needed

THERE WILL probably be times this summer when you will be asked to use less electricity than you'd like.

PG&E is doing everything it can to see that you have all you really need, but as this was written in mid-May there were a great many question marks, and only one thing seemed really clear:

Power supply this summer will be tight, and everyone's help in saving energy will be necessary. (It will also help hold down summer utility bills, the highest of the year for many customers.)

Two important things you can do to help:

- Don't use electric appliances during the hours of peak use between noon and 6 p.m. unless absolutely necessary.
- If you feel you need an air conditioner, set the thermostat at 78° or higher and as far as possible avoid those hours of noon to 6.

Some background:

The possibility of not having enough power to meet summer's peak demands was raised in earnest in late April.

At that time the big Rancho Seco nuclear power plant belonging to the Sacramento Municipal Utility District was shut down in compliance with instructions from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. (Rancho Seco power is an important part of the total Northern and Central California supply.)

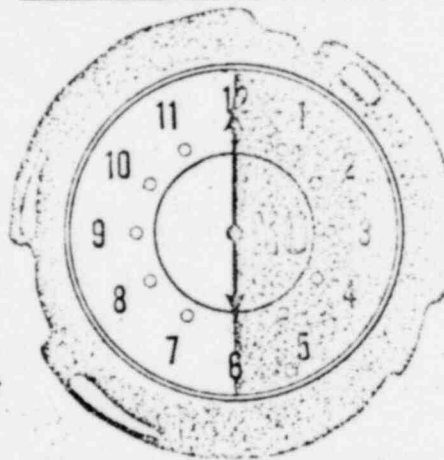
But before this happened PG&E had already been busy.

Early in the year, when licensing of PG&E's own Diablo Canyon Power Plant [story on page 4] did not conclude in time for its output

to be counted on for this summer, PG&E began negotiating to buy all available power from neighboring utilities, principally in Southern California.

In April, with the possibility of a Rancho Seco shutdown, PG&E took new steps:

- Arranged with the Bonneville Power Administration to get a major block of Northwest power capacity in May, a month earlier



than already planned. In May additional Pacific Northwest supplies became available, as did additional capacity from the Castaic pumped storage project of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. With these developments, reserve margins of generating capacity should be about 10 percent in June, July and August—tight but probably manageable margins. (Reserve margins are explained later in this story.)

- Formed an ad-hoc committee of chief operating officers of the five major California utilities, to insure fullest coordination of conservation programs and of all power resources available to California.

- Began contacting members of the Western Systems Coordinating Council, a voluntary league of 46 utilities in 14 western states and British Columbia, to explore possibilities for assistance.

- Stressed again to regulatory agencies the need for approvals of new generating capacity so that the summertime energy-emergency pattern of recent years will not continue.

Question marks remain:

PG&E's incoming president and chief operating officer, Barton W. Shackelford, warned that many factors could affect the supply of power this summer. The length of time Rancho Seco would be out of service was a prime question, but far from the only one.

"As in the past," Shackelford said, "in face of an emergency, all utilities have voluntarily gone the extra mile to help each other.

"The availability of Rancho Seco during the summer months would help a great deal to alleviate the tight supply picture in Northern California this year. But the picture will depend also on what type of summer weather we have, the action of our customers voluntarily to curtail the use of air conditioners and other appliances during the peak time, and the absence of major generating plant failures.

"To the maximum extent possible, however," he said, "PG&E and every major California utility are determined to provide uninterrupted electric service."

Reserve margins—what and why
Turbine-generators may malfunction. Boilers may have tube

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To Block Rancho Seco Restart

By Leo Rennert
Bee Washington Bureau Chief

OUR ORIGINAL

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission plans to go into federal court next week in an attempt to prevent the reopening of the Rancho Seco nuclear plant near Sacramento, The Bee learned Friday.

The environmental group asked the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission last month to hold a public hearing on the plant's safety before allowing operations to resume.

The commission Thursday opened the door for a public hearing but rejected the request that Rancho Seco be kept closed in the meantime.

The hearing probably would be held in Sacramento in a few weeks but the commission may approve a

restart of the plant as early as Tuesday. This means Rancho Seco could be back in business long before critics would get a chance to question at a public hearing whether safety measures have been sufficiently tightened at the 900,000-kilowatt facility in light of the Three Mile Island accident in Pennsylvania.

"We're definitely contemplating filing an injunction," Andrew Baldwin, legal director of Friends of the Earth, told The Bee.

"It's irresponsible to allow a restart of Rancho Seco and then have a hearing later on whether that was a proper move in the first place."

Baldwin declined to give further details about his group's legal strategy. He hinted, however, that discussions are under way with two

dissident members of the governing board of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District to determine if they will join in the lawsuit.

The two directors also had filed a petition with the commission seeking a public hearing on the safety question before restart is permitted.

Rancho Seco has been closed since April 28 when the commission ordered all nuclear units with the same reactor design as Three Mile Island to suspend operation to allow for equipment changes, new safety procedures and equipment modifications.

The commission staff has concluded that SMUD has complied with these conditions and that Rancho Seco can be safely reopened.

PG&E pledges studies to assure safety of Diablo Canyon

(The following is based on remarks made by PG&E President John F. Bonner at the company's annual meeting April 18.)

OUR 2-MILLION kilowatt Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant is moving closer to operation. Hearings before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Atomic Safety and Licensing Board for issuance of an operating license concluded in February.

It is still too early to tell what effect the Three Mile Island accident in Pennsylvania will have on the licensing procedure for Diablo Canyon. The facts on the accident are still not completely known. They are being thoroughly investigated now by a Presidential Com-

mission, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards, the Electric Power Research Institute, other utilities, equipment suppliers, and, of course, our own experts are intensively investigating it as it relates to Diablo Canyon.

The company is committed to assuring the safety of any nuclear power plant it operates. We do not intend to operate any nuclear plant unless we are satisfied with its safety features. Diablo Canyon has been subjected to the most rigorous design review in history, and its operators have been intensively trained for several years and tested repeatedly.

There are substantial differences

in the design of our Diablo Canyon plant and the Three Mile Island plant. Based on the information we have to date, we believe that these differences would prevent the Three Mile Island sequence of events from occurring at Diablo Canyon.

Although it does not now appear that any substantial changes in design or operating procedures for the Diablo plant are necessary, if additional facts show that changes in the Diablo plant or its operating procedures are necessary, we will make them.

The Three Mile Island accident was serious and regrettable, but we will learn from what happened there and even further improve the safety of nuclear power plant operations.

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