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"OFFICE ON WHEELS"

May 6, 1980

Honorable John F. Ahearne  
Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Ahearne:

On April 22 the Nuclear Regulatory Commission conducted a hearing to solicit public comments on the Philadelphia Electric Company's revised emergency response plan for its Peachbottom Nuclear Plant based on criteria established by the Commission after the Three Mile Island disaster.

Despite the importance of this meeting, few people attended the meeting. Why? The answer is simple. The Commission did not widely advertise the meeting either among residents of the area, the press corp, interested environmental groups or elected officials. As an United States Congressman, I did not receive any notification from the Commission about this important meeting.

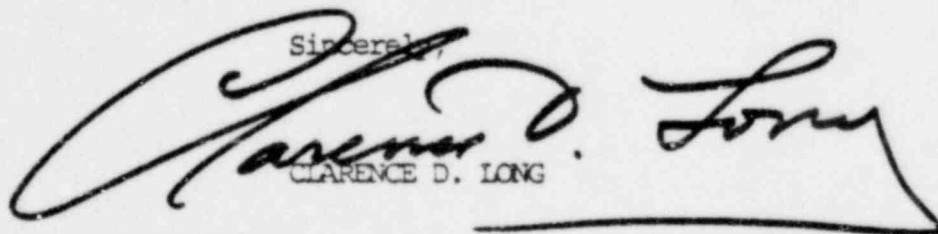
In view of this situation, I strongly urge the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to schedule another meeting, which is widely publicized, to obtain further public comments and analyses on the Peachbottom Nuclear Power Plant's emergency response plan.

The lesson from Three Mile Island is clear. Nuclear energy is an economic and environmental deadend.

Enclosed is a mailing that I sent to all of my constituents in which I outline my arguments against nuclear energy. The response I received was overwhelming opposed to using nuclear energy.

I look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Sincerely,

  
CLARENCE D. LONG

CDL/tk

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

## The Trouble with NUCLEAR ENERGY!



Photo by Robert S. Dyer, Environmental Protection Agency

### THE TROUBLE WITH NUCLEAR ENERGY...

*Your taxes, going to hidden subsidies of the nuclear energy complex, are diverting us from safer, speedier and, above all, cheaper energy.*

Why is the President asking Congress for another \$1.848 billion to subsidize nuclear energy?

My article, "The Trouble with Nuclear Energy," was published in the *Baltimore Sun* 1 1/2 years before the Three Mile Island accident.

Read it and weep! Better, write me and your Senators whether you want Congress to appropriate more money next year on nuclear energy than on all other kinds — solar, oil and oil shale, coal, gasohol, geothermal, hydroelectric — combined. This \$1.848 billion doesn't begin to account for all the subsidies, including tax breaks, waste disposal, dismantling plants saturated after 30 years with radioactivity, Price-Anderson Act ceiling on claims for damages if a "melt-down" should ever destroy thousands of lives and billions of dollars of property, including yours.

Whom is the government trying to help — you, the consumer, or the big firms fattening on government subsidies?

The garbage problem: The U.S. has dumped drums of nuclear waste off the Atlantic coast, including Maryland's. This waste will remain radioactive for thousands of centuries. Thousands of centuries! And with less than one century passed, some of these drums are leaking!

**READ IT AND REACH FOR YOUR PEN!**

CLARENCE D. LANE

## Letters to the Editor

### The Trouble with Nuclear Energy

Sir: My October 8 letter to the editor pointed out that nuclear energy is an economic dead-end. Rebuttals from three distinguished representatives of the nuclear-industrial-intellectual complex are summarized in the words of Vernon Stricklin, public relations director for Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (in his November 1 letter to the editor): "... nuclear generation remains... the most economical, safest and most environmentally acceptable means of expanding our domestic energy supply." Wow!

If, as Mr. Stricklin claims, the average residential user of electricity in the Baltimore area pays less for electricity as a result of Calvert Cliffs nuclear power, it is only because of vast government subsidies and hidden costs for which the average taxpayer has already paid and will continue to pay. Mr. Stricklin and Robert Deutsch and my old friend Dean Roy, judging by their November 19 and 22 letters to the editor, may be as unaware as the average taxpayer of these hidden and postponed subventions.

Subsidies running to scores of billions of dollars for reactor development, research into biological, medical, environmental and materials behavior.

Subsidies by the billions of dollars in government sale of uranium to private industry at prices far below taxes, interest or cost of risks incurred.

Subsidies for disposal of radioactive waste (which will be around for thousands of years), the true cost of which, as the General Accounting Office points out, is not reflected in the cost to the consumer.

Subsidies for dismantling obsolete nuclear plants at the end of their 30-to 40-year life. Costs for disposal of this dangerous wreckage could equal that of building the original plant. Since utilities do not post bonds to pay for this future cost, it will fall on the taxpayer or the consumer.

Subsidies in the form of tax breaks. Each new domestic power station receives a 20 per cent tax subsidy, half in investment tax credits and half in accelerated depreciation allowance.

Subsidies in the form of limited accident liability, under the Price-Anderson Act, the constitutionality of which has been challenged by Federal Judge Michelson. The probability of a major nuclear accident producing

damages exceeding the \$560 million limit is not fanciful but real. That is not the kind of risk which responsible government or business places upon bystanders.

Despite vast sums from the public purse, the nuclear industry is in trouble. An executive of Atomic General noted, on its withdrawal from the nuclear field in November, 1975, that "no major nuclear company has made a profit in 20 years." The major producers—Westinghouse and General Electric—have not had any new orders since 1975. A senior aide to Energy Secretary James Schlesinger has said: "The great nuclear boom is never going to happen."

Foreign nuclear vendors are in no better shape. Britain, Japan and Canada have histories of losses, declining orders and growing public opposition, stemming from worries about radioactive waste disposal problems. The recent Canadian government announcement of a "major step to wide use of nuclear power," namely a huge underground radioactive waste disposal project, is an attempt to disarm "public concern" and revive private interest.

The project is another government subsidy, necessary for dealing with already accumulated waste, but since it would not reduce the other costs of nuclear power, and would not be in operation until 1995, it can hardly do much to revive private investment.

Mr. Stricklin and others of the nuclear "complex" put the blame for the losses and cancellations on environmentalists and legislators (like Congressman Long). But of 68 nuclear plants delayed or cancelled in 1977, only 14 were attributed to licensing and litigation, and delays for these reasons averaged only about five months of the 12 years required to complete a nuclear plant.

A key factor behind the nuclear slump has been rising costs. Construction costs from 1967 to 1974 increased 500 per cent. Construction cost overruns are ranging from 100 per cent to 267 per cent. The cost of uranium has gone up nearly 800 per cent since 1972, compared to the six per cent rise for long-term coal contracts. Says the Iowa State Commerce Commission:

"There are literally no answers. Until we get these, our commission will do what it can to prevent any

company from investing in a nuclear plant."

No matter the costs! Nuclear power is needed, its supporters say, to fill the energy deficiency "here and now." But the dozen years it takes to complete a nuclear plant will hardly give us energy "here and now."

Long-range nuclear prospects are equally unpromising: The entire free-world supply of uranium in the next two decades would produce, in the impossible event that we had the capital to do so, only a sixth to a fifth of our energy needs. Extending uranium resources by building breeder reactors is quite rightly opposed by the administration as putting further strain on limited capital supplies, causing even greater pollution and, through the output of plutonium, multiplying the already difficult problems of containing the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

By contrast, conventional energy sources—oil, oil shale, and coal, animal wastes, wood and other vegetations, the sun, the wind, heat within the earth—range in adequacy from generations to forever and, in the case of the sun and wind present no pollution problem because they are there whether used or not.

Messrs. Stricklin, Deutsch and Roy argue that research breakthroughs have not been forthcoming to harness the renewable resources or get energy out of oil shale and strip-mined coal without damaging the environment.

On the contrary, the hearings this year before my Interior Appropriations Subcommittee elicited that the environmental problems associated with coal and oil shale, of which we have generations of supply, are at solution or close to it—without subsidy and despite disincentive domestic price ceilings.

So far as solar energy is concerned, not only has our government given it no research emphasis, but progress in the private sector has actually been hindered by the billions of public-subsidized dollars which the nuclear industry pays in competition for brains and capital and by the public testimony of vested groups fearful of losing their investments, their high-salaried jobs and their tax consulting fees.

Clarence D. Long,  
Member of Congress,  
Second district, Maryland,  
Washington.