

DOCKETED
USNRC

Secretary of the Commission
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington D.C. 20555
Attention: Docking and Service Branch

August 14, 1992

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OFFICE OF SECRETARY
DOCKETING & SERVICE
BRANCH

Dear Sir:

I am writing you because of the grave concern I have about the Palisades Nuclear Power Plant of Consumers Power Co. (Covert township, Michigan) and its new plan that may effect the future health of the ecological system of the Great Lakes.

Over the past two decades during which the plant has been in operation, they have had one of the worst safety records of the 87 nuclear plants in the country. Now Consumers Power informs us that they intend to store spent radioactive fuel rods, on the site, above ground, in concrete casks and just 150 yards from the ever moving shoreline of Lake Michigan. Furthermore, these proposed casks have not been certified nor tested in any way. No one knows for sure the effect of the severe Great Lakes weather on these constructions. Also in question is the wisdom of storing such a potentially lethal substance in storage casks on notoriously unstable sand dunes. The environment for the placement of these casks is a totally unpredictable one.

Just one small accident or miscalculation could lead to a tragedy of major proportions. Any contamination to the lake could affect the entire Great Lakes system. Conservatively, four million people in the Chicago area alone get their drinking water from Lake Michigan. Populations going over into Lake Huron and beyond could be affected as well as the agriculture of the entire fruit belt of southwestern Michigan.

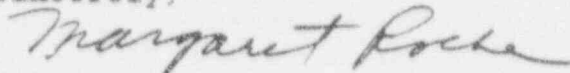
Organizations that have served as watchdogs for this particular power plant have become discouraged over the complex state and national politics that have permitted this, permissive experimentation that could jeopardize so many lives. Because of Michigan Public Act 113, Palisades is now within the law in storing high level radioactive waste in above-ground facilities. As a result of this hastily passed law, there will be no public hearings, no cost benefit analysis, no environmental impact study, no proper monitoring.

Time is running out. The highly radioactive spent fuel is scheduled to be moved to the first casks in January. Palisades Power Plant cannot continue to operate if they are prevented from using these casks. I believe the decision to use the casks was hastily made under the immense pressure the owners and officers of Consumers Power face because the federal government offers no permanent storage facilities, forcing the power company to find some storage method on their own site or lose the whole plant. The

Power company Officials tell us that the storage is temporary and the radioactive waste will be moved to a permanent site when one can be built by the federal government. This time could be decades away and in the meantime the casks could become defective or vulnerable to access by hostile persons. It all comes down to the one obvious, horrendous truth. There is no such thing as "AWAY". As long as the plant is in operation there will be an unending amount of hazardous waste accumulating. Scientists tell us this fuel will be dangerous to all life for at least 10,000 years. It makes good sense to force Consumers Power Co. to temporarily cease operations at the Palisades Nuclear Power Plant until such time when the spent fuel can safely be moved to a permanent, underground, federal facility rather than the continued buildup of hazardous waste with no solution, in the foreseeable future, for its disposal.

This is a grave situation affecting the several millions of people who depend on the Great Lakes for the quality of their life. I hope you agree and will use the power of your office to work to prevent this hasty storage technique from being approved by the NRC in September.

Sincerely,


Margaret Roche

Available: Margaret Roche (616) 764-1549, Box 158A, R.R#2,
Covert, Michigan, 49043 through Labor Day then 2322 Ridge Avenue,
Evanston, Illinois 60201 (708) 864-5141

cc: Don't Waste Michigan (Nuclear watchdog group located in
Kalamazoo, Mi.
Sierra Club
Casey Bukro, Chicago Tribune environmental editor
Senator Albert Gore
Senator Paul Simon