

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Harold L. Price
Director of Regulation

FROM : *Duncan Clark*
Duncan Clark, Director
Division of Public Information

DATE: DEC 27 1962

SUBJECT: LOCATION OF BODEGA REACTOR HEARING

DPI:JF

30-133

This is to supplement Joe Fouchard's discussion with you on December 26 concerning Dr. Alexander Grendon's request that the public hearing on the Bodega Bay reactor be held in California.

Dr. Grendon called the SAN information office on December 26 to inform AEC that a citizen group was reported to be circulating petitions requesting that the hearing be held in California. The citizen group reportedly is implying that such a petition is the only way that the hearing could be held there. Dr. Grendon believes that some firm expression from AEC that the hearing will be held in California should be made now, even though we still do not have an application for construction permit.

We recommend that you inform Dr. Grendon that when the PG and E application is ready for hearing, the hearing will be held in California. We believe this is consistent with past practice of the Commission where unusual citizen interest has been expressed (Elk River, for example). It also will help to show the citizens of the Bodega area that we are aware of their interest, and we are voluntarily planning to hold the hearing in California. We believe that Dr. Grendon would plan to make your letter public.

Two recent news stories are attached which are indicative of the growing interest in AEC proceedings concerning Bodega Head.

Attachment

cc: R. Lowenstein, L&R
R. Southwick, San Francisco Operations Office

Rec'd Of. Dir. of Regn.

12/26/62

3:15 p.m.

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From the Sacramento Bee, Tuesday, December 25, 1962

PETITIONERS OPPOSE PGE NUCLEAR PLANT

Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California:-----The Northern California Association to Preserve Bodega Head and Harbor is circulating a petition against the Pacific Gas and Electric Company Nuclear Power Plant at Bodega Head. The petition now being circulated in Sonoma County is aimed at the Atomic Energy Commission, the State Public Utilities Commission, and the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors. The petition appeals to the three public bodies asking for a public hearing. The measure also asks for public hearings in Sonoma County. The AEC has yet to grant a construction permit to the utility for the reactor. The Association is attempting to have these hearings held on the West Coast.

PG&E Reactor Safety Factors Are Argued

(Continued from Page 1)

error in the test and training regimen, he said, and standards now in use in this country are only guesses.

"The safe dose" of radiation, he said, "is no dose."

"But we must consider the benefits and risks" of atomic energy, adding that the judgment on the benefits "should not be made by scientists, who are only observers in the field of nature. The decision rests on you, and should not be delegated to scientists."

Dr. Thornton Sargent, University of California research scientist at the Donner Laboratory of Medical and Bio-Physics, who outlined the major known reactor accidents, including the 1960 accident involving a small boiling-water reactor in Idaho that killed three

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actor, Dr. Sargent said the actual cause is still unknown.

"The intent of reactor safety design," said Dr. Thornton, "is of course to build in automatic, fail-safe devices to prevent accidents in spite of operator error."

"Nevertheless," he said, "this accident occurred."

The PG&E proposal is for a boiling-water reactor at Bodega Head, using a "new kind of containment system... called pressure suppression containment," Dr. Thornton said, "which is yet to be tested on a working reactor."

Full-Scale Testing

It will be first tested in full-scale operation in the Humboldt Bay plant which PG&E is to put into commercial operation this year.

PG&E says it tested the pressure suppression system in model form and in part of the final reactor before gaining AEC approval some two years ago.

(The company says the "unique design, which protects operating personnel and the public against hazards resulting from an accidental release of radioactivity, is believed to be a significant advance in the art" of reactor building).

Dr. Richard C. Sill, University of Nevada physics professor, who outlined the professional physicists' concern over the dangers of radiation, and who said it is difficult to get "technical information and evaluation from competent scientists who are free from financial or administrative restraint."

He saw "just one way you can proceed at this juncture and retain traditional democratic institutions and processes. You can demand by petition, publicity, and possibly by legal action that the permit granted to PG&E be held in abeyance until the whole subject... has been properly evaluated."

He later said two possible consultants who would be "independent" are Dr. Ralph E. Lapp, of Arlington, Va., on the reactor health and physical hazards part of the problem and Dr. Harrison Brown, California Institute of Tech-

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Bodega Head Nuclear Reactor Safety Factors Questioned

By DON ENGBAHL

The safety of Pacific Gas & Electric Co.'s proposed nuclear reactor at Bodega Head is the new battle cry of opposition to the company's plans for a power plant there.

A series of speakers at a meeting in Santa Rosa Saturday night sketched the hazards of radiation and of reactors in general terms.

And others outlined paths of action that include appeals to the Sonoma County Supervisors and court action to halt the utility company's plans until further studies can be made.

The big opposition in the earlier battle before the Public Utilities Commission—which the company won—were arguments that the plant would destroy the recreation, scenic and scientific potential of the Bodega Headlands and Bodega Harbor.

None of the speakers at Saturday night's meeting before about 120 persons said flatly the Bodega plant is likely to have an atomic accident; but they said the safety systems are untried on a full scale—and that the question of public protection should be more fully explored.

A recurring theme was that the "experts" should not be trusted by the public, but that the public should be fully informed of the safety and then make a decision on the plant.

Midnight Debate

The relative calm of the 11:30 hour meeting was ripped near midnight when Alexander Grendon, the Governor's Co-Ordinator of Atomic Energy Development and Radiation Protection, entered the discussion.

There as an observer, Mr. Grendon

declared he found "a thousand inaccuracies" in what was presented but when pressed by several of the speakers finally said he thought they were "errors in interpretation."

But he did promise the group that he would ask that the Atomic Energy Commission proceedings on PG&E's construction permit application—the next big step—be held locally.

He predicted he would be successful in getting the hearing moved from Maryland, where they are customarily held.

And he said the AEC's proceedings would deal with the questions of reactor safety, and told the crowd that "you can't be your own doctor, you can't be your own expert."

That rankled John Radu, Santa Rosa, who with Marvin E. Brown, Valley Ford, are to form a "steering

committees" to solicit anti-plant petitions.

"T-'s man," Mr. Radu declared, "insults our intelligence! We have the right to dislike anything we want . . ."

Mr. Grendon apologized.

Speakers and Issues

Some of the speakers and issues raised:

Dr. Malcolm Peterson, representative of the Greater St. Louis Citizens' Committee for Nuclear Information and director of the Washington University Division of Gastroenterology, outlined the sources of radiation and the effects in man—cancer, shortening of life and genetic changes transmitted from generation to generation.

Scientists and nations disagree on what is a "safe" level of radiation. (Continued on Page 2, Col. 3)

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Peril at Bodega Head

Editor—The Public Utilities Commission has approved the P.G. & E. Bodega Head project—virtually as presented by P.G. & E. and with no safeguards assured for that scenic and unique area.

The arguments by Dr. Thornton Sargent (The Chronicle, November 11) seemed convincingly to refute the reasons presented by P.G. & E. for its choice of this location.

Specifically, the very great possibility that a temperature inversion in the local waterway could raise temperature for as much as a few days to a level where much of the life would be killed alone makes the site most incompatible with the needs for producing power . . .

ASHTON BROWN.

Kensington.

S.F. CHRONICLE 11/20/62

nology geochemistry professor).

Max Kortum, Petaluma rancher and a strong figure in the battle before the PUC earlier this year, told the group that Sonoma County Supervisors were "fooled continuously by the word 'steam plant'" when the permit for the plant was granted.

They didn't know then that the plant was to be atomic-powered, he said, but now he said he hopes a "proper hearing can be held" by the county on the use permit it issued in 1960.

Phillip Berry, Oakland lawyer who represented the Sierra Club at the PUC hearings, told the group he finds strength in the argument that the use permit was illegal, on grounds that PG&E didn't submit complete plans and specifications on application.

"One of the really tragic things," he said, "is the attitude taken by the Board of Supervisors in this county." That attitude he defined as "arrogant and presumptuous" in "not holding one public hearing" on the question of the permit.

David Pesonen, organizer of the meeting and a leader in the Sierra Club battle against the plant before the PUC, told the crowd that "this isn't over yet."

"Skeptical Attitude"

"The democratic process," he declared, "demands a skeptical at-

titude," and urged the audience to be skeptical "of the experts," and to "remain skeptical of the people who spoke here tonight."

He saw Mr. Grendon in the rear of the room at the Odd Fellows hall and asked him to answer a question from the floor about the possibilities of "other uses" of the Bodega site other than an electric power plant.

Mr. Grendon used that as a platform from which to explain the official mechanisms for insuring safety of the plant.

He intervenes in proceedings before the AEC, he said, on behalf of state agencies "to see that nothing is overlooked in the way of safety."

A "measured risk" is a price of progress, Mr. Grendon said, and "we must not stifle progress by not doing anything."

Mr. Pesonen told the state official that he presented "a very able case for a very disabled subject," and said Mr. Grendon answered "glibly," working "at a great tactical disadvantage."

Mr. Grendon objected; he wasn't being glib, he said; his answers were "carefully thought out and honestly spoken."

Mr. Grendon agreed—in answer to a question from Mr. Pesonen—that he'd attempt to get the AEC hearings held locally.

But he warned that only testimony of "experts" or those directly involved would be weighed by the AEC.

After the meeting he made his

"thousand inaccuracies" statement which brought a knot of speakers around him. He said there were "so many that it is impossible to detail" them, but on pressure from a couple of the speakers conceded some might have been "mis-interpretations."

But "extravagant things were said" about the "relative hazards" of the plant, and the "tone of the meeting was not to inform, but to mis-inform."

The meeting was sponsored by the Northern California Association to Preserve Bodega Head and Harbor, the Bodega Bay Chamber of Commerce and the Santa Rosa Unitarian Fellowship.