

THREE MILE ISLAND

ALERT

JULY
1988

315 Peffer Street; Harrisburg, PA 17102

TELEPHONE: 717-233-3072

NRC Seeks Means to License Seabrook by Vera L. Stuchinski

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is still trying to figure out how to license the Seabrook nuclear power plant. Operation of the New Hampshire plant is stalled because state and local officials refused to submit emergency evacuation plans on the basis that safe evacuation is not possible.

The NRC is now attempting to blackmail elected officials into providing emergency plans for Seabrook, by changing the rules for all nuclear power plants. Basically, the NRC would change emergency plan requirements for all plants involved only in fuel loading and low-power operation. The reasons? The NRC says the risk to the public at low-power operation is much lower and there would be more time to notify government officials of an accident.

Here's the scenario: The NRC will present government officials in the Seabrook area with a *fait accompli*. After loosening licensing requirements and issuing a license for low-power operation, the NRC believes local officials will feel compelled to develop an emergency plan. With a plan in place, the NRC will then allow full-power operation at Seabrook.

NRC "Reform" Bill in Senate by Vera L. Stuchinski

The U.S. Senate may soon vote on a bill (S.2443) to abolish the five NRC Commissioners and replace them with a single administrator, appointed by the President, and a three-member Nuclear Safety Board which would investigate accidents and other problems at nuclear power plants. Because of the following provisions, the bill has drawn fire from safe-energy advocates:

- The bill allows the single administrator to appoint two of the three Safety Board members, which would undermine the independence of the Board.
- There are no provisions to ensure that the single administrator cannot control funding or influence employees of the board.
- The Safety Board is empowered to investigate only "significant safety events" (abnormal occurrences), which limits them from investigating any events they consider important.
- This legislation would allow the administrator to stop inquiries by the Office of Investigations without a formal finding.

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IS REQUESTED

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SUNDAY, JULY 17

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IMMEDIATELY**

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• Also, under current law, meetings between the Commissioners are open to the public. With a single administrator (and his/her deputy), there would probably be little public access.

If you feel strongly about such changes, please contact Senators Heinz and Specter, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, and make your views known. For more information about S.2443, contact the Nuclear Information Resource Service, 1424 16th St. NW, Suit 601, Washington, DC 20036.

Court Throws Out TMIA Suit Against the NRC by Eric Epstein

On May 6, 1988 a lawsuit filed by TMIA, Public Citizen and several other safe-energy groups was dismissed on procedural grounds. The suit, filed on November 19, 1987, alleged that the NRC failed to enact binding regulations governing the training of workers at nuclear generating stations. More specifically, the complaint argued that the NRC was in violation of section 306 of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 which mandated that the NRC "promulgate regulations...for the training and qualifications of civilian nuclear power...operating personnel." Instead of complying with this directive, the NRC endorsed the nuclear industry's training accreditation program. Unfortunately, the court accepted the NRC's argument that the case was untimely, because 180 days had passed since the effective date of the NRC's action. The substantive issues of this case were never dealt with, thus TMIA and other groups intend to reopen the issue at a later date.

TMIA Opposes GPU's Plan to Mothball Unit 2 by Eric Epstein

In official comments sent to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, TMIA has registered its opposition to GPU's planned Post-Defueling Monitored Storage (PDMS) for Unit 2.

The GPU proposal would put the clean-up of Unit 2 "on-hold" for at least 20 years, turning the island into an unstable radioactive waste site. The PDMS plan would leave some parts of the reactor highly radioactive, while most of the plant would be contaminated with lower levels of radioactivity. (If TMI is mothballed it will remain radioactive for several hundred years). Since the radioactive materials are unevenly dispersed and not housed in containers, Unit 2 would become an unstable radioactive waste site.

Calling for an immediate clean-up, TMIA argued that GPU has the resources at hand to complete the cleanup in three to four years at a projected cost of \$170 to \$240 million. If GPU delays the cleanup for an indefinite period of time, a whole new work force will have to be assembled and trained, and a much more expensive funding package will have to be put together.

Not surprisingly, the NRC has endorsed GPU's plan in an Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) issued in April. Unfortunately, several familiar and disturbing themes surfaced in this document. To begin with, the NRC relied heavily on data supplied by GPU. For instance, the NRC staff assumed GPU's projections about radiation locations and radiation levels were accurate. In addition, the NRC presumed that GPU will have the economic resources (approximately \$200 to \$320 million in 1988 dollars) to finish the cleanup.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP, THEN GIVE MORE TO SUPPORT TMIA ACTIVITIES

NAME _____ PHONE _____
ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

Intervention Fund Contribution: \$10 \$20 \$50 \$100 \$MORE (Checks in the amount of \$50 or more can be made payable to the TMI Legal Fund for tax deduction purposes.)

Membership: \$15 Regular Membership \$50 Sustaining Member
 \$25 Non-Profit Organization \$100 Patron
 \$5 Low income, Student \$200 Club Member
 \$5 Non-member, newsletter subscription

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO TMIA, 315 Peffer St., Hbg. PA 17102

TMIA argues that GPU has an experienced work force and the means, both economical and technological, in place today to continue the cleanup without delay. Moreover, while the NRC staff did not have a clear preference in resolving this issue, but stated that the "TMI-2 site should not be allowed to become a waste disposal site." The public needs to let the NRC know that we have a preference: clean the plant up now! Plan to attend the next TMI Advisory Panel meeting on Thursday, July 14, 7:00 p.m., at the Holiday Inn Town.

NRC Drops Proposal in Victory for Safe Energy Advocates

The NRC has withdrawn its proposed rule to redefine some high level nuclear waste as low level waste. Everything that is currently considered high level waste, such as irradiated fuel will remain so. Unfortunately, efforts by safe energy advocates to have some low level waste reclassified as high level also failed.

Mt. Ashmore: Harrisburg's Great Wonder

by Brian Hunt

Have you ever driven by the Harrisburg Municipal Incinerator on South Cameron Street with its huge black mountain of ash and wondered—"What's in that pile?" Every lab analysis of "Mt. Ashmore" (as state Department of Environmental Resources (DER) employees have named it) agrees: that pile is made up of hazardous wastes containing dangerous amounts of toxic metals like lead, cadmium, and arsenic. Although there is no doubt that Mt. Ashmore exceeds federal toxicity standards, the city of Harrisburg has been allowed to let that pile of hazardous wastes grow far above the permitted height of eight feet until it has reached 70 feet high and 80 feet across. Mt. Ashmore also contains a much more dangerous hazard, Dioxin, the chemical that made the government buy-out the community of Times Beach, Missouri.

The ash is the residue from Harrisburg's garbage incinerator. Much of the toxic metals are trapped by the pollution control devices at the base of that tall, belching smoke-stack. Some samples of this flyash prove that it is 13 times more toxic than EPA's standard for hazardous wastes. Still, the greatest portion of the toxics are not captured in the old, poorly maintained pollution control devices. They go right up the stack and into the air of Steelton and South Harrisburg. Currently, the Harrisburg plant has six outstanding violations for visible emissions from the stack. Just last May, DER tested the stack emissions and discovered the plant was emitting seven times more particulates than allowed by law. In 17 years of operation, stack emissions have been tested only four times and only once was the facility in compliance with federal standards.

This long record of environmental abuse at the incinerator is the most likely source of alarming levels of the toxic metal cadmium that DER has found in soil around the plant. Yet with all the evidence of unchecked pollution, DER and EPA have taken no vigorous enforcement action against the facility. Frequent complaints from local residents have resulted in promises, but nothing else. The city plans to sell the plant to someone who will make necessary upgrades and repairs, but those repairs are years away. Meanwhile, Mt. Ashmore continues to grow except for the parts that are blown into the wind or washed by the rain.

If you would like more information regarding Harrisburg's garbage incinerator, contact Brian Hunt, c/o the Harrisburg Center for Peace and Justice, 315 Pepper Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102.

CONGRATULATIONS: Barbara & David

Long-time activists Barbara Nace Misicko and husband David recently had a second son. Andrew David weighed 8lbs. 6oz. at birth and at two weeks of age joined many of us at the June 18 TMIA Picnic.

Access to NRC Public Documents Available Through Library Computer

The NRC staff has established a demonstration program designed to expand the scope of information available to users of the agency's Local Public Documents Room at the State Library in Harrisburg and to make that information easier to access. The library has been provided with a computer terminal, telecommunications hookups, and microfiche files of all publicly-available NRC documents from 1981 to the present. The system provides several kinds of searches for locating documents in files for all NRC-licensed power plants and other facilities. After a six-month period, the program will be evaluated to see if it should be continued and possibly expanded. The level of use will be a primary consideration in that determination.

Military's Radioactive Landfills Exposed in New Book

Deadly Defense is the first book which exposes the environmental impact of the entire nuclear weapons complex. Air and water contamination problems at all 16 production plants are detailed, including the dumping of 30 million gallons of water into the soil each year at the Savannah River Plant; the leaking waste pits at the Fernald facility in Ohio (which hold 11 million pounds of uranium); and the dumping of 70,000 curies of radioactivity in the Snake River Aquifer in Idaho.

In readable language the book summarizes the hazards of each site, chronicling a pattern of careless dumping of extremely toxic and long-lived radioactive materials into streams, unlined trenches, and pits. The 170-page book features 16 clear maps of nuclear weapons sites and has dozens of diagrams, photos and other graphics. Included with each book is a 17 x 22 inch four-color map that show the highway and train routes used for dangerous shipments of plutonium and other strategic nuclear materials. For your copy of *Deadly Defense*, send \$15.00 to the Radioactive Waste Campaign, 625 Broadway, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10012.

The TMIA Picnic on June 18 was a huge success, lots of fun and we made some money. Thanks to Eric Epstein for hosting the event at his home.

CALENDAR---CALENDAR---CALENDAR

Thursday, July 14---TMI Advisory Panel, 7 p.m. at the Holiday Inn, 2nd & Chestnut Sts. Harrisburg

Sunday, July 17---Picnic at CampRiley from noon until dark (see enclosed flyer for details)

Wednesday, July 20---TMI 10th Anniversary Planning Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Harrisburg Friends Meeting House, 6th & Herr Streets, Harrisburg.

Saturday, August 6---Commemoration of the Hiroshima Bombing--6 p.m. Dinner at the Chapel Hill United Church of Christ, Erford & Poplar Church Roads, Camp Hill. Japanese Dinner. Tickets \$5.00 (contact Paul Lujanac 774-0253).

Speaker: Bob Schell, "Does the Path to Peace Run to the Pocketbook." Open poetry reading.

Tuesday, August 9---Commemoration of the Nagasaki Bombing---7:30 p.m. Gather at Market Square Church for procession to Riverfront Park. Candles on the Water and Interfaith Worship service.

There will be no formal TMIA Planning Council meetings in July or August.
All are invited to attend the activities and meetings listed in the calendar.



PICNIC

ANNUAL PICNIC AT CAMP RIELY

DATE: SUNDAY, JULY 17TH

TIME: NOON UNTIL
COME EARLY AND GET IN THE POOL!!!!!!!

PLACE: CAMP RIEELLIEYYY -
GO ON FRONT STREET OR 322 WEST UNTIL YOU
GET TO ROUT 443; GO EAST ON 443 LESS THAN
2 MILES; CAMP WILL BE ON YOUR LEFT

MUSIC: DEWEY WILL BE THERE AND WE WILL HAVE THE
DEWEY REVUE, SO BRING YOUR INSTRUMENTS

DONATION: \$ 5. KIDS SMALLER THAN 2 WATERMELLONS FREE.

THIS, YEAR AS ALL THE OTHER YEARS, A BIG DINNER.
EVERYONE IS BRINGING A POTLUCK DINNER TO SHARE AT 5 PM.

ACTIVITIES: SWIMMING
POOL VOLLEY BALL
JET SKIING
BATHING BEAUTY CONTEST (SERIOUSLY)
GREASED WATERMELLON
WATER BALLON CATCHING CONTEST
LIMBURGER, CHEESE ROLL
UNDERWATER KISSING CONTEST
MUCH MUCH MUCH MORE!!!!!!!

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