

Special Collections

THREE MILE ISLAND

ALERT

JULY 1990

315 Peffer Street; Harrisburg, PA 17102 TELEPHONE: 717-233-3072

NRC Deregulates Some Nuclear Wastes

JUL 18 1990

As predicted in the December 1989 Alert, the NRC has adopted a policy to treat certain nuclear wastes as "Below Regulatory Concern (BRC)." This means radioactive wastes will be treated like ordinary household garbage and soon show up in garbage incinerators and landfills. The vote on the policy was 4 1/2 to 1/2, with Commissioner James Curtiss supporting the outlines of the policy, but dissenting from many of the specifics.

According to *The Nuclear Monitor*, the announcement of the policy on June 27 was met with a firestorm of criticism. Citizens groups in many cities held press conferences and demonstrations, with some dumping garbage at local utility offices. The U.S. Public Interest Research Group characterized the deregulation as an attempt at "linguistic detoxification"—the government takes pollution and declares it clean, even though it is not.

The policy's only justification seems to be to save the nuclear industry money. Four states (Pennsylvania's legislation is pending, see below) and more than 50 local jurisdictions already prohibit the unregulated disposal, radioactive wastes within their borders. While the National Academy of Science recently concluded that radiation is far more dangerous than the government had ever previously admitted and that there are no "safe" levels of radiation, the NRC seems once again ready to sacrifice the public health to advance the interests of the nuclear industry.

State Senate Action Needed to Ban "BRC" and Establish Waste Facility

by Eric Epstein

Last summer the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER) selected Chem Nuclear to operate the Appalachian Compact's low-level radioactive waste facility (U.S. Ecology was the only other corporation to bid on the project). Pennsylvania had earlier agreed to be the host state.

However, Chem Nuke has not signed a contract with Pennsylvania due to the legislature's delay in approving House Bill 1743, a bill which provides \$30 million for the site-selection process and also includes language which would empower Pennsylvania counties and municipalities to bar the disposal of Below Regulatory Concern radioactive wastes in landfills, incinerators or at recycling facilities. --continued on next page--

See the enclosed flyers for information about this year's Hiroshima-Nagasaki Day Observance and for information about TMIA's August 26 Picnic at Camp Reilly

A RED X INDICATES YOUR DUES PAYMENT IS REQUESTED

Three Mile Island Alert
315 Peffer Street
Harrisburg, PA 17102



OPEN IMMEDIATELY



Chem Nuke's signing of the contract is contingent on the passage of HB 1743 which has already passed the House and is awaiting action by the Senate. Due to legislative and procedural impediments, the Appalachian Compact's facility will not be on line until at least 1996.

On April 30, 1990, representatives from the Compact's states (Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania and West Virginia) met for the first time as the Waste Compact Commission. Two demonstrators from Three Mile Island Alert attended the meeting and unfurled a banner which read: "Chem Nuke Is A Criminal." During the question and answer period, TMIA again requested that DER Secretary Arthur Davis disqualify Chem Nuke as the site operator based on Chem Nuke's, and their parents' (Waste Management) abysmal environmental record. Once again, DER's counsel maintained that after "extensively" evaluating Chem Nuke's and WMI's "compliance history" there was "no basis to disqualify" Chem Nuclear.

"Final" Testing Underway on Evaporation Unit

Saying the actual evaporation of 2.3 million gallons of radioactive water could start in August if tests are successful, GPU announced it was conducting the "final" tests of its evaporation equipment in early July. GPU says all the radioactive elements except for radioactive tritium have already been processed out of GPU's final solution.

TMIA has waged a four-year battle to block the evaporation of the radioactive wastes and continues to oppose the unproven technology. By releasing radioactive steam into the atmosphere, GPU is conducting what TMIA Chairperson Debbie Baker has characterized as a "massive nuclear experiment with unforeseen health consequences." Baker explains TMIA members remain unconvinced as to the safety of the process and hold serious concerns about the potential adverse health effects.

Health Records on Nuclear Workers Finally Opened to Researchers

In what can only be described as a major victory for those concerned about the effects of radiation on health, the U.S. Department of Energy has finally agreed to release the health records of more than 200,000 nuclear workers to scientists with the Three Mile Island Public Health Fund. The fund—which first requested the data in 1986—was formed to study the effects of radioactivity after the TMI accident.

U.S. Senator John Glenn (D-Ohio) had also repeatedly sought the record since 1980. "You name the excuse and we heard it through the years," Sen. Glenn told The New York Times. "First they couldn't find it. They they said they couldn't release it. Then our request wasn't proper. It's been a long push. But the release of all this data will finally let the researchers outside of the Energy Department to start assessing whether workers and the public were hurt by radiation hazards."

Records from workers at the weapons plants at Hanford and Richland Washington; Los Alamos; Savanna River, South Carolina; Fernald and Miamisburg, Ohio; and Amarillo, Texas will be released to Dr. Alice Stewart, an epidemiologist from Birmingham (England) University who is the TMI Health Fund's principal investigator.

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 Members _____ \$50 Sustaining Membership
 _____ \$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 Pepper Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102

Dr. Stewart and two other researchers were once dismissed by the Energy Department after a study of data on employees at the Hanford nuclear reservation in Washington showed that plant radiation was causing unusual numbers of pancreatic, lung and bone marrow cancers among workers. The finding, announced to the Government in 1976, led to Dr. Stewart's dismissal and began the struggle between the Department of Energy, Congress, and independent scientists on access to the data. In appearances before Congress Dr. Stewart has argued that by keeping the records secret, the Government was seeking to prevent disclosure of the hazards of its atomic weapons plants.

New Button, Bumper Stickers, T-Shirts Available

Buttons proclaiming TMI's legacy, **TMI Contaminated Forever**, are now available at the TMIA office for just 50¢ each. In addition, the office now has bumper stickers at \$1.00 and a new stock of the ever popular **They Lie** t-shirts at a mere \$8.00 each. They are perfect for summer birthday gifts or belated June anniversary presents.

TMIA Secures Education Grant

National Community funds has awarded a grant of \$2,000 to TMIA to be used for general support for educational activities. News of the award reached the TMIA office in mid-June and, after the completion of some necessary paperwork, the funding is expected sometime in mid-summer.

Volunteer Acid Rain Monitors Sought

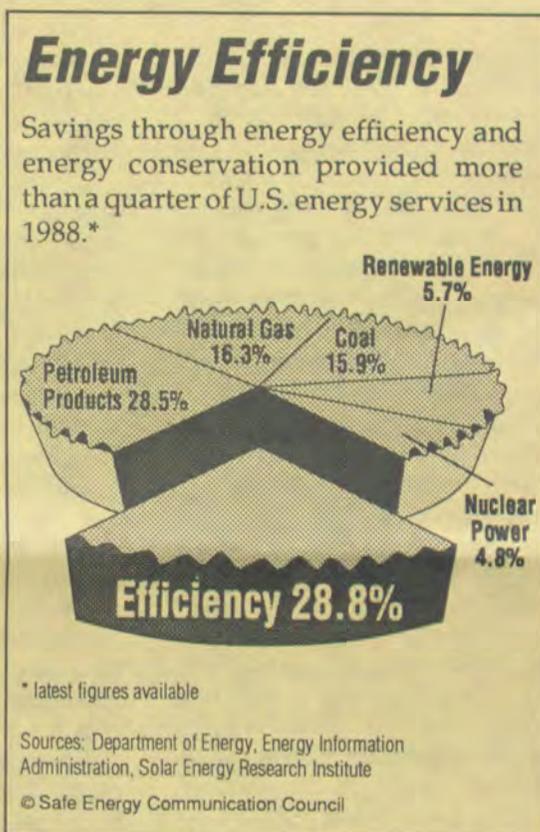
The Alliance for Acid Rain Monitoring (ALLARM), a group of citizens united by their concern about acid rain, has formed a group to provide education on the issue and to document the effects of acid precipitation in the Commonwealth by monitoring the acidity of streams.

Acid rain is formed as the result of a chemical reaction that occurs when water in the air reacts with air pollutants sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide. These pollutants result mainly from coal-fired power plants and automobiles, causing precipitation to be more acidic than normal.

ALLARM volunteers weekly monitor a stream or lake in a location convenient to them. The monitoring consists of measuring the pH and alkalinity and sending the results to ALLARM for interpretation and analysis. The weekly tests only take 10 or 15 minutes and volunteers are asked to commit to test a stream for a full year. For a tax-deductible donation of \$20, volunteers receive a test kit, a newsletter subscription, and invitations to periodic workshops. Scholarships are available for those not able to afford the \$20 contribution. For more information about ALLARM, contact Dr. Cindie Wilderman, Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA 17013 or call 717/245-1573 or 717/245-13555.

CALENDAR

- August 4-9 Arts for Peace Exhibit at Strawberry Square
- August 5 2PM, YWCA Peace Site, "Peace: A Legacy for Children"
- August 9 7:30PM Candles on the Water - meet at Market Square Presbyterian Church, processional to river
- August 26 TMIA Picnic at Camp Reily - Noon until dark
- Sept. 11 7PM - Earth Day Planning Meeting, Friends Meeting House, 6th & Herr Streets. Pa. Rain Forest Action Committee is planning the 1991 celebration





VIEWPOINT

A Forum on Energy and Environmental Issues

Energy Efficiency: Good News From New England

By ARMOND COHEN

Among the environmental issues of the 1990s, energy - especially electricity - is sure to be the biggest.

America's fossil fuel plants produce about two-thirds of our acid rain and one-third of smog-causing chemicals and carbon dioxide (the leading culprit in global warming). Nuclear power plants produce a prodigious amount of radioactive waste. Few Americans welcome power plants or transmission lines in their backyards.

When generated from these sources, electricity is dirty energy. Yet current utility projections suggest that we will need a lot more of it over the next two decades. They say we need to build many more power plants.

By using electricity more efficiently, we can create a different scenario. Several New England power companies have set out to do just that with the help of the Conservation Law Foundation of New England (CLF) and other consumer and environmental advocates.

This change is due in part to recent efficiency breakthroughs in high energy-use technologies - motors, lights, cooling equipment and building construction methods - that use much less electricity than, but perform the same as, current models. For example, a compact fluorescent light bulb that fits into a conventional light socket can provide the same quality of light with one-fourth the energy of a conventional bulb.

Together, these technologies could cut U.S. power demand by 50 percent. Saving energy this way could cost one-half to one-third less than generating it from new power plants.

Utility investment in energy efficiency is a simple idea with logical

applications. But key questions arise:

If efficiency is so great, why aren't people already buying high-efficiency lights and motors?

First, these technologies are new and unfamiliar. In addition, many cash-poor businesses and financially strapped homeowners are reluctant to buy these items today - even when it is proven they actually can save money after one or two years.

In New England, the utilities are footing the bill. That's because under the law, a utility and its customers would have to pay for expensive new energy supplies to power inefficient lights and motors. Therefore, it's in everyone's best interest for the utilities to install and pay for more efficient lights and motors that "produce" energy (through savings) more cheaply than producing energy from a new power plant.

Since utilities traditionally have made money by selling more, not less, electricity, New England's power companies initially resisted this approach. But after much public debate and litigation, the utilities sat down with the CLF and other consumer and environmental advocates to design the programs to meet this challenge.

Now, 12 New England utilities are fielding aggressive programs to retrofit houses, mills and offices with high-efficiency lighting, reflective windows, energy-wise motors and other equipment. The utilities also are investing millions of dollars in new buildings to make them 25 to 30 percent more electrically efficient than state codes require. The companies will spend 2 to 5 percent of their 1990 income on these efficiency programs, with more to come in future years.

What about the power companies' bottom line? That, too, is in-

cluded in the New England program. Recent rulings in Massachusetts and Rhode Island allow the utilities to earn slightly more profit on their energy efficiency investment than on power plants, even as their sales decline from less power use. Many utilities now see that making their customers efficient is the best way to become financially strong and economically competitive.

Under the New England program, everyone wins - utility ratepayers, shareholders, local communities, the environment.

Why aren't similar programs under way everywhere in the United States?

Good question.

Armond Cohen is a senior attorney with the Conservation Law Foundation of New England, a Boston-based environmental law group representing members throughout New England.

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Letters should be addressed to VIEWPOINT, c/o SECC, 1717 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Suite LL-215, Washington, D.C. 20036

VIEWPOINT provides the nation's press with expert opinion on timely energy and environmental issues. VIEWPOINT is a public service of the Safe Energy Communication Council, a non-profit organization working to provide factual and educational information on our country's energy choices.

please join us...

11 Years After the accident

for a TMIA Summer Picnic

and... **SPLASH** Party

Fun, food, frolic and friends at the annual Camp Reily picnic.

Date: Sunday, August 26 (Rain or Shine)

Time: Noon until...

Come early & get in the pool!

Place: Camp Reily

Go north on Front Street past Fort Hunter (or 322 West until you reach Rt. 443), then turn right onto Rt. 443 east. Go less than 2 miles. The road to Camp Reily will be on your left.

HOMER SAYS:
"I'LL BRING
MARGE & THE
KIDS"

Live Music: Jam Session after dinner -
Bring musical instruments*

NEW

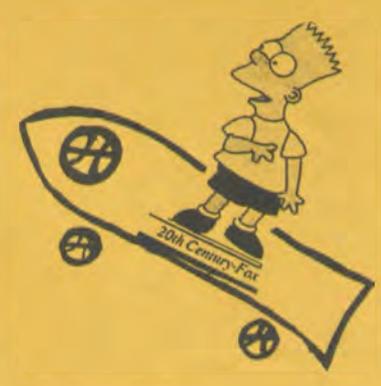


AVAILABLE

Donation: \$5 per adult
\$2 per child

Activities Include:

- Swimming 1:00 - til- 7:00
- Land and pool volley ball
- Greased watermelon contest
- Rockin' & Rollin'
- Much, much, much, much more!!!

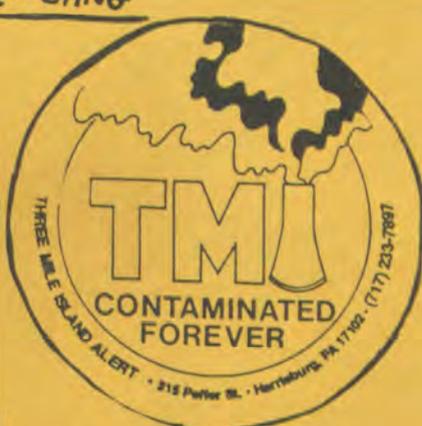


Bring food to share for the big potluck dinner at 5 PM.
Beverages provided.

* Bring your favorite NO-NUKE SONGS +

JOIN Two imaginary BANDS forming: "WITHIN THE RADIUS"

&
THE "GIVE US A BREAK NOT A LEAK" BANG



The Harrisburg-Hiroshima-Nagasaki Committee & The Interreligious Forum present

Peace:



A legacy
for our children

AUG. 4-9, 1990 10 AM - 6 PM
DAILY, EXCEPT SUN.
GALLERY 110, STRAWBERRY SQ., HARRISBURG

* **PEACE ART** - AN EXHIBIT OF WORKS BY INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN CERAMICIST, KITA, AND THOSE OF AREA ARTISTS AND POETS

AUG. 5, 1990 2 PM TO 5 PM
YWCA PEACE SITE
MARKET AND COURT STREETS, HARRISBURG.

* **MILE ZERO** - A DOCUMENTARY. THE STORY OF FOUR CANADIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO ORGANIZED A CROSS-COUNTRY SPEAKING TOUR TO PROMOTE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT. THEY SPOKE TO 120,000 STUDENTS COAST-TO-COAST. A PASSIONATE STORY THAT CAN INSPIRE PEOPLE OF ALL AGES.

* **POETS OF THE PAPER SWORD** A LOCAL LITERARY GROUP WILL READ THEIR WORKS. - REFRESHMENTS -

AUG. 9, 1990 (NAGASAKI DAY) 7:30 PM
FELLOWSHIP HALL
MARKET SQUARE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, HARRISBURG.

* **CANDLES ON THE WATER** - LETTERS TO THE FUTURE INTERFAITH WORSHIP AND REFLECTION WITH AREA CLERGY PARTICIPATING. LIGHTED LANTERN BOATS WILL BE FLOATED ON THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVER IN THE TRADITIONAL JAPANESE SERVICE FOR THE DEAD.

THE PUBLIC IS ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND!

• FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CALL: 763-9552 OR 232-7816 •