

THREE MILE ISLAND

ALERT

October
1991

315 Peffer Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102-1834

Telephone: 717/233-3072

All But Nuclear Plant Fuel Dubbed "Low Level" Wastes by DER

To the surprise of most interested observers, the Department of Environmental Resources has confirmed that all kinds of material from nuclear power plants—including used control rods—would be stored in the proposed "low-level" radioactive waste facility being planned for Pennsylvania.

The waste facility, which will be operated by Chem-Nuclear Systems, Inc. of South Carolina (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Waste Management, Inc.), is to accept wastes from Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. Previously, while state officials admitted materials from nuclear plants would be included, discussions were limited to things like protective clothing, rags, filters, and other materials contaminated in day-to-day operations. Jeff Schmidt of the Pa. Sierra Club said he only learned recently that state officials intend on dumping "decommissioning wastes" from nuclear power plants at the proposed facility. Such materials, Schmidt says, are "much hotter and much longer lived" than wastes from medical centers and research facilities.

The TMLIA office has a copy of the Chem-Nuclear Systems Phase I Siting Plan available for review. Call Kay or Eric at 233-7897 if you wish to stop by the office to review the plan.

Evaluation Report on PDMS Delayed - Support Appreciated, Needed

TMIA intervernor Eric Epstein reports the NRC staff's safety evaluation report on Post Defueled Monitored Storage (PDMS), which was expected in early September, has been delayed and won't be completed until late October. Therefore, an NRC pre-hearing conference on PDMS will not take place until early 1992.

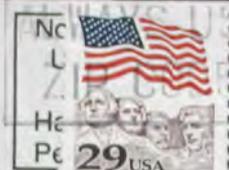
TMIA extends its thanks to all members who have renewed their memberships and send additional funds to assist with the PDMS intervention. Additional funds are needed to support the intervention process. Please contribute what you can.

A RED X INDICATES
YOUR DUES PAYMENT
IS REQUESTED

**Halloween Party
October 26**

**OPEN
IMMEDIATELY**

Three Mile Island Alert
315 Peffer Street
Harrisburg, PA 17102



Embrittlement Worries Lead to Yankee Rowe Closing

On July 31, 1991, the NRC unanimously rejected a petition filed by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) and the New England Coalition Against Nuclear Pollution (NECAP) calling for the immediate suspension of Yankee Rowe's operating license. The NRC action appeared to give the green light to Yankee Atomic to keep the plant running through a scheduled refueling in April, 1992, but an appeal by UCS brought to light a series of problems with the reactor and focused attention to an embrittled reactor vessel.

Basing its claims on internal NRC staff reviews, UCS argued that the 31-year-old reactor's pressure vessel no longer meets NRC regulations due to serious embrittlement caused by three decades of radiation bombardment. The result, according to UCS, "is a pressure vessel so brittle it could rupture...leading to an uncontained release of radioactivity to the environment."

The NRC, in a stunning reversal, ordered Yankee Rowe closed on October 1, voicing concerns about the safety of the containment vessel. At the time it was ordered closed, the plant was the nation's oldest operating nuclear power plant. The shutdown decision is significant because the nuclear industry has been supporting the renewal of plant licenses about to expire in the next decade. "With no new plants being built," said TMIA spokesman Eric Epstein, "the industry will atrophy as the licenses expire, unless operators can convince the NRC to extend the lives of plants that grow more dangerous each day they operate."

According to Epstein, Yankee Rowe's is a 167 megawatt Westinghouse reactor that went on-line in 1961. While TMI's 808 megawatt Babcock and Wilcox reactor has only been on-line since 1974, embrittlement may be accelerated due to the larger fuel capacity. He says this issue may be addressed during hearings on the Post Defueled Monitor Storage (PDMS) proposal and he commended UCS and NECAP for their efforts in getting "potentially the most dangerous plant in the country" closed.

Letters to Legislators Needed on Energy Strategy and "BRC"

The U.S. Senate may soon consider S. 1220, the National Energy Strategy bill. Developed by President Bush and John Sununu and sponsored by Sens. Bennett Johnston (D-La.) and Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.), S. 1220 is a comprehensive energy policy bill that would move our nation in precisely the wrong direction. It emphasizes production over energy efficiency, and turns over more of our tax dollars to the nuclear, coal, and oil industries at the expense of energy sources such as solar, wind, and other renewable resources. Sen. Al Gore (D-Tenn.) characterized the policy as "breathtakingly dumb" and said it would be an environmental nightmare for every American community.

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 Peffer Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102

Among other things, S. 1220 promotes oil drilling in the pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, contains new giveaways to the coal and oil industries, and provides for "one-step" reactor licensing. While the nation desperately needs a national energy strategy, S. 1220 isn't it. Please write Senators Wofford and Specter and let them know you oppose this backwards step.

You can help bury the NRC's Below Regulatory Concern (BRC) proposal which is designed to allow a large share of the nuclear waste stream to be recycled into consumer goods or disposed of in municipal incinerators and landfills. Simply write Congress and let them know you oppose this health-threatening proposal. If you are writing a Senator, ask for support for Senator Mitchell's S. 1111 which seeks to repeal the NRC's 1986 and 1990 BRC policies and to give states the authority to regulate any radioactive wastes deregulated by the federal government.

If writing a House member, ask that they support the strengthened subcommittee version of H.R. 645 which would remove the NRC's authority to deregulate radioactive materials, revoke the BRC policies, and expand the authority of states to regulate radioactive materials deregulated by the federal government. Please send copies of your letters to: Bill Magavern, U.S. PIRG, 215 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20003.

House Address:

Rep. _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Senate Address:

Senator _____
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Return Your Petition to NAIL

The August *Alert* included a petition from the Nuclear Action & Information Lobby (NAIL) for you to circulate against the Bush/Sununu/Johnston National Energy Strategy. Now's the time to return them to NAIL at the address on the bottom of the petition: 1424 16th Street, NW, #601, Washington, DC 20036.

TMIA on "Renewables" Resource List

TMIA is listed among other safe energy groups and renewable energy resource contacts in a resource guide published by the Union of Concerned Scientists for a new national campaign designed to change the public perception of solar power, wind power, and other renewable energy sources. UCS will help interested people plan and carry out educational activities and political actions that promote greater use of renewable energy. For more information, write UCS at 26 Church Street, Cambridge, MA 02238, or call them at 617/547-5552.

It's Never Too Early for Holiday Shopping

The 1992 Peace Calendar is available at TMIA's 315 Peffer Street office for only \$10.00. This great holiday gift could be perfect for the social activist on your holiday gift list.

CALENDAR - CALENDAR - CALENDAR - CALENDAR

- Oct. 25-27** A conference celebrating the 20th anniversary of Public Citizen, Georgetown U. Conf. Center, Washington, D.C. Theme: "Taking Back America - A New Democracy for the 90s." For more information: TMIA 233-7897 by 10/18.
- Oct. 26** Halloween Party - 8PM at 6th Street Fire Hall, 3701 N. 6th, Harrisburg
- Nov. 8-12** World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet, Miami, FL. The focus is on women's roles and needs, the participation of men is welcome.
- Dec. 14** Peace Pilgrimage. 11:30AM - 7:30PM A ten-mile walk via Rt. 191 from Nazareth to Bethlehem, Pa.



VIEWPOINT

A Forum on Energy and Environmental Issues

Sacramento Solution: Energy Efficiency

By ED SMELOFF

(VPT) In 1989, Sacramento, California ratepayers took control of their energy future. Spurred to act by skyrocketing electric bills, Sacramentans voted to close the Rancho Seco nuclear plant, a clone of the Three Mile Island reactor. The "Ranch" had operated at a dismal 39 percent average capacity over its 14-year lifetime; ratepayers demanded cheaper, more reliable power.

In two short years since, the publicly-owned Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) has rebounded from its nuclear nightmare, stabilizing double digit rate increases, recovering Wall Street confidence for its previously plummeting bond ratings, and transforming a depressed work force into proud employees. Its plan to meet future electricity demand with efficiency improvements will actually *save* SMUD's ratepayers more than \$1 billion by the year 2010.

After years of struggling with a troubled nuclear plant, SMUD is becoming a national leader in cost-competitive energy efficiency, and looking toward renewable energy technologies.

Efficiency is seeping into other utilities' boardrooms and supply plans. In New England, 12 utilities will invest more than \$300 million annually to retrofit mills, offices and homes. These utilities have committed \$1.65 billion through 1996 toward programs to install high-efficiency lighting, reflective windows, upgraded motors and other equipment. They foresee saving money over the long run through efficiency measures that ensure adequate electricity supplies *without* new plant construction.

In California, two private utilities, Pacific Gas & Electric Co. and Southern California Gas Co., have both established aggressive energy efficiency improvements for the

homes and offices they serve.

Through direct installation, consumer rebates, education and loan programs, these utilities and many others are making a safe bet... because efficiency pays.

Sacramento's efficiency and conservation program is perhaps the most ambitious. It includes controlling the maximum demand for power, reaching out to architects, engineers and builders to encourage energy efficient designs for new buildings, and implementing conservation programs to save electricity in existing homes and businesses.

New construction offers a vast conservation opportunity in Sacramento, especially in lighting and air conditioning. With proper design, new buildings can be made 25 percent more energy efficient than required by building standards without adding to construction costs. Electricity to serve these new homes and offices will come from savings captured from existing customers.

SMUD provides free compact fluorescent lights, low-flow shower heads, caulking compound, weatherstripping and switch plate gaskets to its customers. Customers can also receive rebates on refrigerators, air conditioners, solar water heaters and other selected measures. And the utility provides low-cost financing and helps arrange for qualified contractors for major equipment installation.

Why all the bother? Because energy efficiency is far cheaper than building new power plants.

Sacramento's energy savings plan extends into the future. With the help of citizen volunteers, SMUD has committed to plant half a million shade trees in its service area by the year 2000, which will reduce customers' air conditioning needs by up to 40 percent.

To meet future electricity

growth, the utility is actively developing several renewable energy projects. Together with other utilities, SMUD is building an advanced solar thermal power plant. This new solar technology holds the promise of sun-powered electricity with no fossil fuel back-up. Also, Sacramento's utility is supporting the commercialization of a variable-speed wind turbine, which will significantly lower the cost of wind power; it will likely install several hundred of these wind turbines in the next five years.

Citizen pressure converted SMUD from a troubled nuclear utility to a model of reliance on energy efficiency and leadership in renewable resources. Its ratepayers make conservation programs work, enthusiastically installing efficient lights and appliances...and reaping the financial benefits. Utilities across the country can save both energy and money by making energy efficiency programs their top priority.

Ed Smeloff is a director, and the elected President of the Board of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District.

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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.

13th Annual
HALL  **WEEN PARTY**

DATE: Saturday, Oct. 26

TIME: 8 P.M. Till ???

PLACE: 6th Street Fire Hall
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