

THREE MILE ISLAND

ALERT

June
1994

315 Peffer Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102-1834

Telephone: 717/233-3072

200+ Attend 15th Anniversary Conference

More than 200 safe-energy activists from 20 states, several Indian nations, and five countries gathered here in late March to observe the 15th anniversary of the beginning of the accident at TMI. The event was organized by TMIA with assistance from several national safe-energy groups including NIRS, Public Citizen, Safe Energy Communications Council, Friends of the Earth, and Greenpeace.

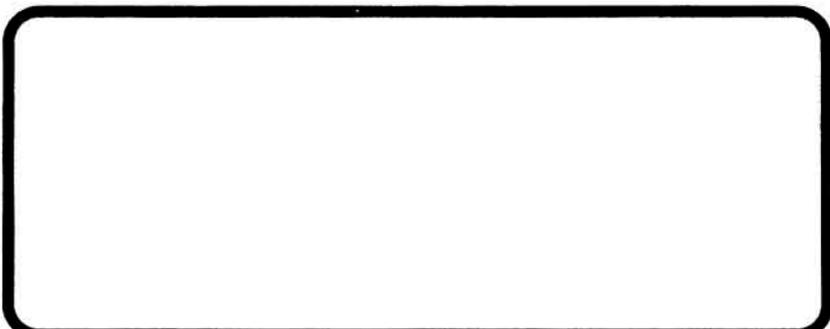
Over March 26 and 27 workshops were held dealing with nuclear waste issues, reactor decommissioning, radiation monitoring, health effects, alternatives to nuclear power, the national nuclear policy, the proposed DOE energy budget (see below), reactor license renewal and safety deregulation, the continuing TMI clean-up, and others designed to provide radioactivists with the skills necessary to carry on the crusade for safe energy.

Keynote speaker Ed Smeloff, the director of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), explained how SMUD closed the problem-plagued Rancho Seco reactor and how they now plan to make up for the power loss through aggressive energy conservation, efficiency, and renewable energy programs.

Harrisburg's own Jane Perkins, now president of the Friends of the Earth, called for more grassroots activity across America with a focus on Washington, including a national safe-energy lobby day in Congress once or twice each year. She suggested that alliances be formed with the labor movement and others "before there is a crisis." She suggested connecting the health crisis issue with the damage coming from toxins, radiation and pollution and called for a tax to be imposed on toxic substances the way other harmful things, like cigarettes, are taxed.

The final speaker was Dr. Helen Caldicott, the Australian pediatrician who founded Physicians for Social Responsibility, well known for her anti-nuclear work. Dr. Caldicott was both articulate and poignant in her examples of the effects of radiation on people and adamant about an end of the nuclear age as the ultimate and non-negotiable goal of safe-energy activists.

The conferees adopted a resolution, "The Harrisburg Call to Action," which called for halting the production of radioactive waste from nuclear reactors and weapons; isolating all radioactive materials and wastes from the biosphere for the duration of their hazardous life; implementing a safe, sustainable energy future based on the efficient use of clean renewable energy sources; and, placing the highest priority in all nations on the protection of health, safety and the quality of the environment now and in the future.



**IMMEDIATELY
OPEN**

Party with Bonnie Raitt
& Crosby, Stills & Nash
Details Inside

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Conference Gets High Marks for Attendees - Evaluation forms were distributed with each 15th Anniversary Conference registration packet and, judging by the more than 60 forms returned, planners, facilitators, speakers, and others responsible for the conference got high marks for their efforts. Attendees were unanimous in giving the TMIA-hosted event a highly positive rating.

Special Thanks - Though planning for the conference was conducted by a committee (including, alphabetically, Bill Cologie, Eric Epstein, Rick Kushner, Kay Pickering, Scott Portzline, Deb Ritchey, Gene Stilp, Vera Stuchinski, and Lauren Taylor), the bulk of the work and responsibility for making it a success rests with Gene Stilp. Gene selflessly acted above and beyond the call of duty from the first planning meeting—recruiting speakers, coordinating the national promotion of the event, arranging funding, arranging the meeting site, arranging for banners, overall coordination and more—right through to the 4AM action at the plant gate. Special thanks also to David Raeker-Johnson for huge amounts of behind-the-scenes work on registration and more; to Bev and Frank Davis, Judy Richard and Karen Stilp for their on-site work at the conference; and to the Three Mile Island Legal Fund and the Rockefeller Family Fund for their underwriting support.

Picnic Planning Underway - Though the location has yet to be secured, TMIA will have its annual summer outing at noon, Sunday, July 17. Let's keep the spirit of the 15th anniversary thriving. The picnic will feature food, music, swimming, and more. Watch your mail for more information.

Bonnie Raitt/Crosby, Stills & Nash Concerts to Benefit TMIA - Both Bonnie Raitt and Crosby, Stills & Nash have arranged for "golden circle" seats to be reserved for friends of the safe-energy movement at their upcoming concerts. A limited number of "gold circle" tickets are being sold at \$100 each which guarantee "gold circle" seating in the front rows of Hersheypark Arena. The \$100 tickets also include admission to a reception with the artists. Bonnie Raitt's show is scheduled for Sunday, July 24, and she'll share the bill with Bruce Hornsby and the Range. CS&N play the Arena on Tuesday, August 9, along with special guests Fleetwood Mac. For more information, call TMIA at 233-7897.

Waste Disposal Focus for TMIA Annual Meeting June 22 - The disposal of nuclear wastes in Pennsylvania will be the focus of TMIA Annual Membership meeting on Wednesday, June 22, 7:15 p.m. at the Friends Meeting House, 1100 N. 6th Street, Harrisburg. The meeting will include the traditional pot-luck dinner and feature the election of Planning Council members. Experts in the issue of nuclear waste disposal will lead a discussion on the waste disposal issue and TMIA members are encouraged to attend with their questions, concerns, opinions and options.

75% of Pa. Disqualified as Waste Site - Chem-Nuclear Systems, Inc. (Chem-Nuke), using a three-stage disqualification process, to be followed by a two-step evaluation process, has approved up a quarter of Pennsylvania as potentially suitable for the Pa. Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Facility. For a copy of their report: *Site Screening Interim Report: Stage Three - Local Disqualification*, write to Chem-Nuke at 750 East Park Center, Suite 200, Harrisburg, PA 17111, or call 1-800/424-2848. That's one, eight hundred, GAG-BUGU.

TMIA Forms Committee on Wastes - TMIA is forming a committee to study nuclear waste disposal in central Pennsylvania. A review of the Chem-Nuke report shows much of Dauphin, Cumberland, York, Perry and neighboring counties are potential hosts for the waste dump, including much of the Susquehanna River basin. If you are interested and willing to work on this issue, call 233-7897.

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

GPU Proposes Dry Cask Storage for Oyster Creek - General Public Utilities, owner of TMI, has proposed building dry cask storage at its Oyster Creek nuclear power plant in New Jersey. Oyster Creek is one of the nation's oldest nuclear plants and is operating at reduced safety margins. NIRS will participate in a June 9 meeting for citizens to review the proposal and issue warnings about the permanence dry cask storage implies. A New Jersey Public Advocate (the equivalent of Pa.'s Office of Consumer Advocate at the PUC) survey a few years ago recommended that the reactor be closed early as a savings to ratepayers. For a while, it appeared GPU would take that advice. Now, GPU appears hell-bent on operating the plant until it collapses.

The Minnesota legislature, after weeks of pitched, see-saw battles, has given permission to Northern States Power (NSP) to build dry cask storage units for radioactive wastes from the Prairie Island nuclear complex on the Mississippi River. A plan to build 17 dry cask units was approved by the Senate, but opposed by the state House, resulting in a conference committee which approved a compromise measure. The compromise will allow NSP to build five units immediately and another four if, by the end of 1996, it has made an effort to site a radioactive waste dump off the island and has contracted for the construction and operation of at least 100 megawatts of wind power generation.

Another eight casks can be built if NSP installs 225 MW more wind power by the end of 1998 and another 200 MW by 2003. The compromise bill also bans the construction of any new nuclear reactors in the state; requires NSP to submit a detailed plan for the phase-out of nuclear power, and requires NSP to provide a "worker transition plan" if the Prairie Island reactors are shut down for more than six months. The compromise also establishes a reduction in rates for low-income households and establishes a legislative task force to completely re-examine all electrical generation-related issues. Though the legislature's action explicitly supports a non-nuclear future for Minnesota, environmentalists were nonetheless disappointed in the outcome of the hard-fought campaign.

NRC Says Local Evacuation Plan Adequate - The NRC rejected the petition of the Pennsylvania Institute for Clean Air, which called for inclusion of the 90% of Harrisburg residents just outside the NRC's ten-mile evacuation zone surrounding TMI. The NRC's response said, "Off-site emergency response plans for TMI-1 continue to meet the standards set forth in NRC regulation." A PICA spokesman characterized the ruling as "moronic." "We know that (the existing plans) meet their regulations . . . We filed our petition to ask them to change their regulations."

Pending Federal Legislation Merits Your Attention - Two matters now pending at the federal level warrant the attention of safe-energy activists. First, Congress is considering the reauthorization of the federal Clean Water Act. There is a move to make some 26,000 NRC licensees nationwide exempt from the Act's provisions. All members of Congress should be notified to support including all radio-nuclide emitters in the Act, including NRC licensees and federal facilities.

On the other matter, back in February, Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, in a setback for the nuclear power industry, cut the breeder reactor program and plutonium recycling study from the budget of the Department of Energy. The move, which meant up to \$112 million more might be available for safe-energy research, won O'Leary praise from the Safe Energy Communication Council and others. Now, members of Congress from states that benefited from the breeder program are working to have this massive waste of taxpayer dollars restored. So, it is time for you to act. Here's how you can help:

- Call Secretary O'Leary's office at 202/586-6210 and thank them for terminating the funding for the breeder reactor.
- Call Budget Director Leon Panetta's office (202/395-3000) and the White House comment line (202/456-1111) and express thanks and support for the decision to fund safe energy rather than the further proliferation of plutonium.
- Call Senators Specter and Wofford and ask them to uphold this prudent budget cut. Use the Capitol switchboard (202/224-3121).
- And circulate the petition enclosed with this edition of the Alert and return it to SECC.

State Health Department Probing Emissions from Defunct N-Plants - The state Department of Health will investigate radiation emissions from two defunct nuclear plants in Armstrong County that are believed to have caused health problems, including cancer, for local residents. The plants in Apollo and Parks Township have operated since the mid-1950s. The Apollo plant has been razed. The plant in Parks Twp., while no longer producing nuclear fuel, still handles radioactive material and is home to a uranium waste burial ground that sits atop a honeycomb of long-abandoned coal mines. The investigation was launched in response to calls for disclosure of emissions information from Citizens Action for a Safe Environment, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and a local newspaper.

Another Study Finds High Cancer Rates in Nuclear Workers - Workers at an atomic weapons plant 18 miles north of Cincinnati died at significantly younger ages and suffered a higher incidence of lung, intestinal and blood cancers than the U.S. population, according to a study released in April. The mortality study of more than 1,000 workers at the Fernald, Ohio weapons plant was conducted by Dr. Peter Gartside, a professor of bio-statistics at the University of Cincinnati. Dr. Gartside has been frustrated in efforts to gain access to records the Department of Energy has compiled, despite Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary's promise to "come clean" with DoE records. DoE staff have expressed concerns about protecting the privacy of workers still living in stonewalling the request.

Nuclear Emissions Linked to Breast Cancers - In a recent report, two leading scientists attribute the epidemic of breast cancers in Long Island to nuclear radiation. The scientists, Dr. Jay M. Gould, a former member of the Environmental Protection Agency's Science Advisory Board, and Dr. Earnest J. Sternglass, Emeritus Radiology Professor at the University of Pittsburgh Medical School, conclude that the increase in breast cancers in the Long Island area may arise from toxic chemicals leaking into the environment, particularly from the stacks of nearby chemical plants. However, they conclude that chemical wastes alone could not account for the high cancer rates and that the epidemic is a result of chemical releases combining with radiation. In the article the scientists point out that the cancers are most concentrated in areas near the three nuclear reactors on Long Island Sound.

Sternglass and Gould point out, "... smoke, dust, and chemicals released into the atmosphere trap radioactivity and enhance the biological damage, explaining why those living in the immediate vicinity of chemical plants are at greater than average risk of developing breast cancer." They note that Texas and Louisiana have the nation's greatest exposure to petro-chemicals, but because they have almost no exposure to civilian reactor emissions, the states have breast cancer rates 40% lower than those on Long Island. They have called on the National Institute of Health to conduct a detailed study of radioactive contamination of food and water as part of their Long Island study.

NIRSNET Now Open - NIRSNET, a computer bulletin board for safe energy and environmental activists, is now open and available free to grassroots activists. You can download and upload files, and use it as an e-mail message center to reach other activists using the board. NIRSNET can be accessed by any personal computer with a modem over 1200 baud. It supports modem speeds of up to 14,400 bps. If you have a color monitor, you may want to set your terminal emulation to ANSI. The phone number is 202/328-1050 and it operates around the clock. There is no charge for using NIRSNET, except for the cost of the phone call. Thanks to the Albert A. List Foundation, a toll-free number is in the works which will eliminate even the cost of the phone call.

ITL Labs Pleads Guilty in Thermo-Lag Case - ITL Laboratories and its president, Allan Siegel, pleaded guilty to five counts of aiding and abetting the issuance of false and fictitious statements related to ITL's testing of the controversial fire barrier material, Thermo-Lag. NIRS Executive Director Michael Mariotte said the plea confirms what NIRS had been saying all along: "Thermo-Lag does not work, never has worked, and must be removed immediately from our nation's nuclear reactors."

NRC Has Official Non-Enforcement Policy - A document exists which gives the Nuclear Regulatory Commission justification for not taking action on controversial issues like the Thermo-Lag installations and other safety-related matters. The document, *SECY 92-043, Exercise of Discretion Not to Enforce Compliance with License Conditions*, was adopted on Feb. 7, 1992, but efforts to obtain it have been fruitless as the NRC says the document is exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) wrote a nine page letter to the NRC on April 20 in an attempt to get a copy of the document raising questions about whether the NRC has "exceeded its substantive authority . . ." with the policy.

Commemorative Posters, T-Shirts Available - 15th Anniversary commemorative posters are available for only \$2.00 each (6 for \$10) from TMIA. There's also a limited number of 15th Anniversary tee-shirts (in sky blue) available. In addition, TMIA has its usual assortment ("They Lie" tee-shirts, bumper stickers, and more) of attractive gift items available.

Anne Feeney in Benefit Performance July 9 - Folk singer Anne Feeney will be in concert on July 9 at 4 and 8 p.m. at the Harrisburg Friends Meeting House to benefit the local Government Accountability Group. Tickets to hear one of our favorite champions of Peace and Justice are \$7. Tickets will be available at the door, or call Pam Parsons at 238-2396.

PEACE

Congress: STOP GIVING OUR TAX DOLLARS TO THE NUCLEAR POWER INDUSTRY

SUPPORT SAFE, CLEAN ENERGY

Dear Congressman:

Since 1948, the nuclear power industry has received 65% of all federal energy research funding. But nuclear power supplies only about 20% of our electricity, and is creating a permanent legacy of pollution, economic burden and radioactive waste. It's time to put our resources toward the future: to solar, wind, and other forms of sustainable energy. At a time of skyrocketing federal budget deficits, it's unconscionable to give more of our dollars to nuclear power interests.

Specifically, we urge you to:

***End all funding for the Advanced Liquid Metal Reactor (also known as the Integral Fast Reactor). This breeder technology is an outgrowth of the failed and dangerous Clinch River Breeder Reactor program.**

***Reduce funding for the fusion reactor program by at least \$200 million. There are four potentially unlimited sources of energy: solar, wind, hydrogen, and fusion. Only fusion is monumentally expensive and produces radioactive waste, yet it receives more tax dollars than any of the other sources.**

***End all funding for dangerous "advanced" light water reactors and other nuclear pork-barrel projects.**

***Support renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. They create jobs and boost our economy.**

Name

Address

Return to Nuclear Information and Resource Service, 1424 16th Street NW, Washington DC 20036, 202-328-0002; 202-462-2183 (fax)

VIEWPOINT

A Forum on Energy and Environmental Issues

U.S. Radwaste Policies Need Tough Independent Review

BY MARTIN GELFAND

VPT—The Department of Energy (DOE) is undergoing a quiet but dramatic transformation, from nuclear promoter to a supporter of clean energy and the democratic process. However, change comes slowly at big institutions. One large skeleton remains in DOE's closet—nuclear waste—which threatens DOE's new openness and positive budget directions.

DOE has always viewed the resolution of permanent disposal of radioactive waste as a way of removing a major barrier to the further development of nuclear power. DOE's 1995 budget retains subsidies for a new generation of light water reactors similar to today's commercial nuclear plants. These subsidies go hand-in-hand with DOE's request for a 40 percent increase in funding— an additional \$152 million this year—in order to rush the dumping of irradiated nuclear fuel rods at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. DOE's proposal would create a nuclear entitlement for additional nuclear waste funds, taking this money off-budget and partially out of Congressional oversight. Senate Energy Appropriations Chair Bennett Johnston (D-La.) has indicated a willingness to strip the requested money from other areas in DOE's budget, possibly shriveling renewable energy research.

Rather than robbing the nation of clean energy research programs and running the risk of future radiation exposures from a hurried dump process, it makes more sense to cut off the tap to DOE waste spending and initiate a comprehensive review of this country's radioactive waste policies. Thirty-nine U.S. Senators and Representatives have written to President Clinton requesting such a comprehensive review. The General Accounting Office, the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board, the Western Governors' Association, Native American organizations and environmentalists have also called for a waste program review.

This review should be conducted by a White House commission with a ma-

majority of members free of vested interest in its outcome. It should integrate all radioactive waste management programs, and reclassify wastes by their dangers, not by their source, as they are currently classified.

For instance, because of federal law, so called "low-level" waste may be handled differently than "high-level" waste, even though some "low-level" wastes have half-lives of more than 100,000 years. Much of the nation's highly radioactive waste is now classified as "low-level." Currently, plans are underway for new "low-level" dumps in 17 states. However, after more than 50 years of nuclear waste production, the United States still has no proven safe site or method of safe, permanent storage or transportation for any type of radioactive waste.

On January 11, 1994, Daniel A. Dreyfus, director of DOE's Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management, admitted the deficiency in the radioactive waste program: "The United States and many other countries are awash in long-lived radioactive materials that have already been produced. At present, we have no comprehensive approach to managing all of these materials over the generations that they will exist."

Not only does DOE have no "comprehensive approach" for wastes on hand, the projected waste from currently operating commercial reactors alone (from 79,000 to 106,000 metric tons) exceeds the legal cap at the proposed dumpsite at Yucca Mountain (70,000 metric tons). Scientists cannot plan for waste storage unless the maximum potential waste production is known, i.e., unless we assume a "no-new-reactors" scenario. But the proposed new generation of DOE-subsidized nuclear reactors is antithetical to any rational plan for managing the radioactive waste stream.

DOE's approach is to literally pour more money down the hole. Some current funding is for irreversible excavation of the first stage of repository

construction at Yucca Mountain—a starter hole for a 5-mile underground Exploratory Studies Facility, at \$850 million. This is a baffling expenditure for a site that has not yet been characterized, in a program with "no comprehensive approach."

The DOE deserves credit for revealing the secret radiation testing that it conducted in the past. However, increasing DOE's budget for the radioactive waste program without making the commitment to an orderly and economic phase-out of waste production is exactly the wrong approach. Instead, the Clinton Administration should completely and comprehensively review all U.S. radioactive waste policies before launching yet another radiation experiment on the American public.

Martin Gelfand is Research Director for the Safe Energy Communication Council.

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Letters should be addressed to **VIEWPOINT**, c/o SECC, 1717 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Suite 805, Washington, D.C. 20036

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