

THREE MILE ISLAND

ALERT

September
1994

315 Peffer Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102-1834

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TMIA AWAITS RESPONSES TO NUCLEAR ISSUES QUESTIONNAIRE

Now that TMIA has mailed its eight point nuclear issues questionnaire to the Pennsylvania candidates running for governor and U.S. Senate, we need to make sure that the candidates answer the questionnaire. (See the August 1994 issue of *Alert* for a listing of the questions that were sent to the candidates.) The candidates were requested to return their answers by October 1; TMIA will publish their responses in a special Nuclear Education Issue before the elections.

Using the following letter as a guide, write to one or more of the candidates and let them know that you are interested in learning about their positions on nuclear energy and radioactive waste. (See page 2 for addresses.) Remember, the candidates won't discuss these issues if we don't demand answers.

Dear Candidate:

Recently you received an eight point questionnaire from Three Mile Island Alert that asks for your position on several important nuclear energy and radioactive waste issues. As a member of Three Mile Island Alert, [or As a Pennsylvanian concerned about the quality of the environment,] I am very concerned about the present and future uses of nuclear technology and the disposal of its inevitable radioactive waste.

I am interested in hearing your views on all of the questions presented by TMIA, but especially your position on [chose one of the issues that interests you most].

Thank you for your commitment to Pennsylvania and good luck in the coming election. I look forward to your responses to the TMIA nuclear issues questionnaire.

Sincerely,

J. Q. Public
(your prospective employer)

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“I cannot conceive of a legitimate basis for the PUC to appeal to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court,” said PUC Vice Chairman Joseph Rhodes, who was the lone dissenter in the PUC’s 1993 vote to approve Met-Ed’s plan. “The battle was already waged and lost in Commonwealth Court,” said Rhodes. “The Commonwealth Court restored justice to the ratepayers.” Met-Ed, which is a 50 percent owner of the damaged reactor, now stands alone in appealing to the state Supreme Court. If the high court decides to hear an appeal, a final decision is not expected before 1996. [from UPI Press Wire]

RUSSIAN OFFICIALS ARGUE OVER EXTENT OF DAMAGE TO NUCLEAR PLANT

The *NY Times* reported in early September that a fire at a Russian nuclear processing plant released radioactive gases into the atmosphere. Plant officials reported that a fuel rod’s protective coating caught fire during reprocessing. The plant is located in Ozyorsk, formerly the secret city of Chelyabinsk-65, 930 miles east of Moscow in the Ural Mountains.

Yuri Rogozhin, a spokesman for the Russian regulatory agency Gosatomnadzor said that preliminary reports indicated that the fire “can be qualified as level three” on a seven-level International Nuclear Events Scale established by the International Atomic Energy Agency. A level-three accident means major contamination and overexposure of workers. The explosion and fire at Chernobyl, the world’s worst incident, was a level seven.

Officials at the processing plant and at the Nuclear Power Ministry, which runs the plant, insisted that there was no serious contamination or worker exposure. “The incident was a minor one, and it’s totally wrong to qualify it as a level three,” said Vitaly Nasonov, a ministry spokesman.

WIND ENERGY GAINING RESPECT, CUTTING COSTS

According to *Northwest Energy News*, a quarterly magazine published by the Northwest Power Planning Council in Portland, Oregon, recent advances in wind technology have made wind energy less than half as expensive as it was in the mid-1980’s.

In the decade and a half that federal and state tax credits have been available to California electric utilities, more than 7,000 turbines have been installed in the Altamont region of Northern California, about 30 miles east of San Francisco. Altamont has taught wind power developers a lot about what does and does not work. Over the years, three major wind developers have emerged: Kenetech Windpower (formerly U.S. Windpower), the 20-year old “granddaddy” of the American wind industry, based in San Francisco; Advanced Wind Turbines, Inc., of Redmond, Washington; and Zond Systems, Inc., of Tehachapi, California.

Wind Power Cost Trends (excluding federal tax incentives and system costs)	
<u>Year</u>	<u>Cents/kilowatt/hour</u>
1983	11.5
1986	11.1
1991	6.0
Current	4.9

Most of the wind turbines used at Altamont and elsewhere spin at a fixed rate so they can generate electricity at a constant 60 cycles per second — the utility standard. The machines have to mechanically adjust to slower and faster wind, which can stress and, ultimately, eventually wears out the equipment. As a result, most fixed-speed turbines are built to withstand a lot of abuse.

Kenetech Windpower, however, has recently built a variable-speed turbine with electronic controls that converts the varying frequencies of generated electricity into a constant frequency. The new turbine can generate wind energy for between 3 cents and 5 cents per kilowatt-hour, depending on wind speeds and constancy. Advanced Wind Turbines, Inc. has also designed a new turbine capable of generating the nickel a kilowatt-hour goal. (continued on page 4)

Want to Know More About New Wind Technologies?

American Wind Energy Association
122 C Street, NW
Fourth Floor
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: 202-383-2500
FAX: 202-383-2505

Kenetech Windpower
500 Sansome Street
San Francisco, CA 94111
Phone: 415-391-7740
FAX: 415-391-7740

Advanced Wind Turbines, Inc.
15042 NE 40th Street, Suite 204
Redmond, WA 98052
Phone: 206-867-0683
FAX: 206-881-8468

Zond Systems, Inc.
13000 Jameson Road
Tehachapi, CA 93561
Phone: 805-822-6835
FAX: 805-822-7880

TMI ALERT NOW AVAILABLE ON PENCYCLE COMPUTER BBS

You can now read *TMI Alert*, as well as other Pennsylvania environmental newsletters, by using your computer and a modem to connect to PenCycle, the Commonwealth's only non-profit computerized bulletin board dedicated to environmental issues. PenCycle is operated by the Pennsylvania Resources Council (PRC). In addition to newsletters, PenCycle offers a host of interesting services and resources, including: Weekly Pennsylvania Senate Environmental Updates; Internet e-mail; Internet-environmental usenet newsgroups; PRC's Recycled Products Guide; Pennsylvania DER Fact Sheets on recycling, composting, etc.; and lots of environmental libraries.

Using PenCycle is easy. Set your communications software to 14,400 baud (or slower), N-8-1 (No parity, 8 bits per character, 1 stop); and have your modem dial 610-353-5295. At the user name prompt, follow the instructions. Other than the cost of the phone call, there is no charge for joining PenCycle or for any of the information. If you have other questions about PenCycle, you can call PRC at 610-353-1555.

NEWS NOTES

- TMIA Planning Council will meet Wednesday, October 12, 1994, at 7 p.m. at the Harrisburg Friends Meetinghouse, 6th & Herr Streets. Members are welcome.

- Syracuse Cultural Workers 1995 Peace Calendar is now available at the TMIA office for \$10.00. The colorful Peace Calendar makes a great gift for birthdays, weddings, or Christmas.

- TMIA recently received a General Accounting Office (GAO) report on federal efforts to determine the health effects of electromagnetic fields (EMF). Although the report makes no recommendations about exposure to EMF, the GAO is critical of the slow pace of federal research programs investigating the effects of EMF. The document, GAO/RCED-94-115, is available free by calling the GAO at 202-512-6000, or you can borrow it from TMIA.

- On Saturday, October 1, 1994, Citizen's Awareness Network, a Massachusetts safe-energy group, will hold a CITIZEN'S ACTION FORUM, an educational seminar on the health effects of radiation, the radioactive waste stream, community participation, aging reactors, decommissioning, and more. The forum runs from 9:30 a.m. till 8 p.m. at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. Registration is \$15. Call TMIA for more information.

**Look For A Special Edition of ALERT Just Before the November Elections.
It Will Contain the Responses of the Candidates to TMIA's
Nuclear Issues Questionnaire.**

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