



THREE MILE ISLAND ALERT

A publication of Three Mile Island Alert

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TMI Rescue on Hill's Agenda

It appears that Exelon's million dollar plus lobbying effort is paying dividends. A 75-member bi-partisan, bi-cameral Nuclear Energy Caucus of the Pennsylvania legislature has developed four recommendations to keep the state's old, non-competitive, nuclear power plants running.

Except for one proposal that would preserve the status quo and let PJM, the regional electric grid operator, dictate the mix of electric generators selling energy to Pennsylvania, which may or may not include nuclear, the rest prop up this dangerous technology and give it advantages over sustainable energy producers. Each would hit Pennsylvanians with increased costs for energy.

The proposals include a tax on carbon-based energy sources and tax credits for every kilowatt hour of "non-polluting" electricity generated by nuclear plants. While proponents of the proposals characterize them as "job-saving subsidies," opponents see it as simply another bailout of nuclear power.

The prospect of a bailout is opposed not only by safe energy and environmental activists, but also by the natural gas industry, which sees the bailout as anti-competitive. Consumer groups who fear electricity rate hikes, large industrial users of electric power, the National Federation of Independent Business, the AARP, and other ratepayer activists also oppose a bailout.

Opponents note that the state

deregulated electric utilities in the 1990s and opened the market to competition. Because of that, Pennsylvania has some of the lowest energy prices nationwide.

Bailout proponents note that once nuclear power plants close, they are gone for good and say this may lead to shortages of electricity and blackouts in the future. However, Pennsylvania's grid manager, PJM, says the state has a current reserve margin of 28%, meaning the retirement of aging nuclear plants would have no

impact on electric reliability.

According to the Patriot-News, Damon Moglen of Friends of the Earth said, "Debating whether or not to give billions of dollars in handouts to a few, decrepit 1970-era nuclear reactors for a few more years of operation is nothing but a distraction from the real task at hand: We need to transform our energy economy. We need the equivalent of an Apollo program in renewable energy, not a debate about whether the Edsel should come in a hatchback model."

UCS Flips on TMI Closure

After decades of calling for the closing of TMI Unit 1, the Union of Concerned Scientists, citing the perils of global warming and climate change, has changed its tune.

In a recent report, UCS found that more than a third of America's N-plants are unprofitable or scheduled to close. "On average it would cost \$814 million annually to bring unprofitable plants back to a breakeven point," the report states. It concludes that closing marginal and at-risk plants could result in a four to six percent increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

Even though UCS once argued that TMI-1—and all the reactors designed by Babcock and Wilcox—should be shut down, it now sees a bailout of TMI to be in the national interest. The B&W design, UCS said in February 1987, are "inherently more dangerous than other pressurized vessel reactors."

Before UCS finalized this policy, TMIA's Eric Epstein wrote the UCS president encouraging him to "rethink" the group's position, pointing to the burden our community has paid to build and repeatedly bail out TMI. After UCS made its position public, many safe energy groups were quick to point out how far an \$814 million annual investment in renewable energy would go to address global warming.



40th Anniversary Observance Starts With Press Conference on Nuclear Waste Crisis

TMI Alert's observance of the 40th anniversary of the TMI meltdown got underway with an October 2 Capitol press conference on the issue of nuclear wastes being transported through Pennsylvania and across America.

TMI Alert Chair Eric Epstein served as the event's moderator and introduced Beyond Nuclear's Kevin Kamps and Paul Gunter to local media. Kamps is a Radioactive Waste Specialist who addressed the safety and security risks of transporting highly irradiated nuclear fuel on America's roads and rails. His presentation included a drone's eye view of the roads and rails on which wastes from Peach Bottom would be transported

through central Pennsylvania. He also showed a video produced by TMIA's security expert, Scott Portzline, which included footage of radioactive wastes moving through central Pennsylvania.

Gunter, Beyond Nuclear's Reactor Oversight Project Director, addressed the risks posed by extending Peach Bottom's license (see page 4) to close to 80 years.

Eric also addressed the as yet unsolved problem of what happens to nuclear wastes. He explained that when nuclear power was first proposed, our government promised us the solution to the problem of long-term storage of highly radioactive wastes was "just around the corner." The solution, fifty



Kevin Kamps & Eric

years later, is still around the corner.

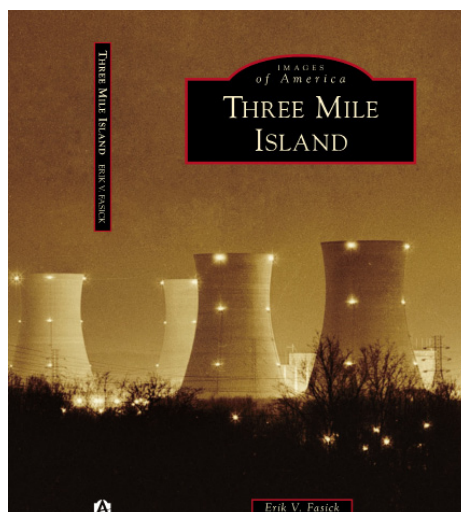
Eric concluded the event with a rather clever analogy, asking "Would anyone buy a house without a toilet?"

Book Signing, Exhibit, Banquet Set for 40th

A new Three Mile Island book will be released during an event at the Historical Society of Dauphin County (HSDC) on the afternoon of Saturday, March 23. Erik Fasick, the book's author and president of HSDC, will be on hand to sign copies of the book. The event will also include a presentation by a panel coordinated by TMI Alert to provide an historical perspective on the TMI accident.

Fasick's book is part of the "Images of America" series published by Arcadia Publishing. It contains photographs of and relating to Three Mile Island from HSDC's photo archives. HSDC obtained the files of Allied Pix, a business that provided photographic services to the Harrisburg Patriot-News from 1952 to 1994. The Allied Pix collection is the source of the photographs in the book. Sales of the book will benefit the Society.

TMIA is also working with the Society to put together a display that will continue for several



months following the anniversary. It will feature blow-ups of some of the book's photos, samples of the mutated plants being supplied to the Smithsonian (see page 3), and various TMI-related historic artifacts. These will include numerous publications from the time of the accident, buttons, posters, tee-shirts, and other mementos.

That same evening as the book release, Saturday, March 23, TMIA will host an "I Survived Three Mile

Island" banquet at the American Legion in Middletown. Everyone who survived TMI, or is related to a victim of TMI, is welcome to attend. In conjunction with the banquet, health surveys (see page 3) will be distributed to document any health effects experienced by those who resided in central Pennsylvania during the 1979 accident.



Mary Stamos Collection is Going To The Smithsonian



The oak leaf on the left and the maple leaf on the right are just two examples of the mutated plants Mary collected since 1979.

Mary Stamos, a long-time member of TMI Alert's Planning Council, has been collecting samples of mutated plants since the TMI meltdown in 1979. Now the world's foremost museum and research complex, the Smithsonian Institution, has expressed interest in acquiring her collection. A small group of TMI Alert volunteers, under the leadership of Scott Portzline, spent hundreds of hours over four months documenting the collection.

There are probably more than a thousand specimens that have been grouped into 320 separate exhibits. Each exhibit was photographed and documented with information about where found, when found, a brief description, and recorded comments from Mary about unique aspects of specific pieces.

The collection is headed to the Natural History Museum's Department of Botany where the individual pieces will be analyzed to ascertain if radiation from TMI caused the cellular structure of the plants to be altered. TMI Alert plans to post the entire database on its

website so the public can examine the data, see the photos, and read or hear Mary's comments about the specimens.

2019 Peace Calendars on Sale

The kitchen wall of every progressive household should not be without a 2019 Peace Calendar from the Syracuse Cultural Workers. TMI Alert has a limited supply of these union printed calendars which retail for \$15.95 on sale for \$10 each.

The calendar, which would be an appreciated holiday present, includes more than 200 cultural notations and will allow its proud owners to observe International Women's Day, commemorate the February 2018 massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, note with PRIDE the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising, and observe the holidays of numerous faiths.

To reserve your copy, contact Kay Pickering at the TMI Alert office at 717-233-7897.

Health Surveys Planned for 40th Anniversary

TMI Alert is working with health care and other professionals on the design of two surveys to collect information about the health effects of the TMI accident and the facility's ongoing operation. Both a "Survivors" survey and a "Victims" survey are planned so information can be collected from those who survived the accident and from the next of kin of those whose deaths are thought to be attributable to the effects of radiation from the accident or plant operations.

While government and industry officials continue to claim no one died from TMI and the only health effect was increased stress, data gathered by epidemiologists who focused on areas around the plant have documented increases in cancer and cancer deaths that may be accident related. The work of the late epidemiologist from the University of North Carolina, Dr. Steven Wing, is well known in the TMI community. Also, a 2009 study in Germany found a 60 percent increase in cancers and a 120 percent increase in leukemia among children living within five kilometers of a nuclear power plant.

Long-time readers of the TMI Alert news may recall a two-phase study to look at cancer risks associated with nuclear power plants that the National Academy of Science undertook in 2011. Unfortunately, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission managed to kill that study characterizing it too costly and taking too long.

The goal of the TMI Alert initiative is to gather information from those who consider themselves victims of the accident and make that information available to the scientific community for further analysis.

Not before a “nuclear autopsy”

Peach Bottom Seeks New License Extension

Though it got its license renewed to operate for another 20 years in 2013, Exelon is looking for another 20-year extension of Peach Bottom’s license. This would mean the plant would be licensed to operate until 2053 or ’54, some 70 years after it was originally licensed to operate in 1973.

When built, most nuclear power plants were thought to have a lifespan of 40 years. Engineers assumed the metal in the containment would become brittle, after constant bombardment by neutrons over decades of operation. An aging plant like Peach Bottom is particularly susceptible to radiation-induced embrittlement, metal fatigue, cracking, and corrosion of its most critical safety related structures and systems that are irreplaceable and inaccessible, including the containment.

Interestingly, the reactor at Peach Bottom is a GE Mark 1 Boiling Water Reactor, just like the ones at Oyster Creek and

Fukushima. Exelon, which owns Oyster Creek, recently shut down that plant, which, in 1969, was the first Mark 1 BWR reactor to be commercially licensed.

One might expect Exelon would harvest and analyze aged materials from this 49 year-old facility. Such tests would provide an indication of the condition of the Peach Bottom equipment. Beyond Nuclear’s Paul Gunter said there should be no consideration of Peach Bottom’s proposed extension in the absence of what he characterized as a “nuclear autopsy.”

Beyond Nuclear has petitioned the NRC to deny the application for renewal. TMI Alert has filed comments on the Beyond Nuclear petition and requested that Peach Bottom secure a new Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The plant seeks to use the same EIS from when the plant was originally built. TMIA believes a new EIS would reflect environmental changes in the 45 years since it opened.

Nuclear Bailouts Undermine Energy Independence

TMI Alert Planning Council members Eric Epstein and Maureen Mulligan penned a letter to the editor of the *Middletown Press & Journal* that appeared under the title above in the paper’s November 28th edition.

In their letter they dispel the notion that nuclear power is “green,” given all the pollution generated in its mining, milling, enriching, fabrication, and transportation, plus the tons of high-level nuclear waste on the back end. They also discuss how uneconomical nuclear plants are and all the advances being made with new, alternative energy sources. Check out this informative article on the P&J website.

TMIA Website Revamp Underway

TMI-Alert is updating and upgrading its website to make it user friendlier and to facilitate easier access to information. The plan is to have the site re-launched prior to the 40th anniversary, in part to give the international news media easy access to resources about the meltdown and its aftermath. In addition, it will be launched as a dot org instead of the current dot com. The URL is now TMIA.com, the new address will be TMIAlert.org.

Trump’s on Both Sides of Yucca Mountain

Both budgets developed by the Trump administration have included \$120 million for the resurrection of the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste site, to the chagrin of Nevada’s Congressional delegation. But when campaigning in Nevada in October, the president said, “I think you should do things where people want them to happen, so I would be very inclined to be against it. We will be looking at it very seriously over the next few weeks and I agree with the people of Nevada.”

Energy Department Support for Coal & Nuclear Stalled by White House

At the President’s request, Energy Secretary Rick Perry had the Department of Energy come up with some “immediate steps” to halt the loss of “fuel-secure power facilities,” aimed at preventing the “premature” retirement of coal and nuclear plants under competition from natural gas and renewable energy sources. DoE developed a draft proposal for the government to buy electricity from unidentified coal and nuclear plants. Unfortunately for DoE, the proposal couldn’t get by the National Economic Council in the White House. Critics mocked what they said was the bankrupt logic of a generalized plan to subsidize coal and nuclear plants whose energy wasn’t required.

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