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While I don't live in San Clemente, I do live exactly 10 miles from SONGS - too close for comfort. I consider myself close enough to be among the first group evacuated should there be any major "error" at this plant. Unfortunately, when I bought my house 19 years ago, I was not informed about the hazards and risk associated with living so close to a nuclear facility. I am now and I have my house on the market. Suffice it to say that I am not relocating in Orange County and my next home will not be anywhere near a nuclear power plant or storage facility (Hanford, Oak Ridge, Yucca Mountain, etc.). I wonder if I will be able to sell my house. More and more people are becoming aware of the risks involved with living so close to nuclear power plants and many are choosing to keep their distance. As was mentioned at one of the city council meetings, real estate values seem to be lower in San Clemente and Dana Point than in the rest of the county. I wonder if there's a connection...

Since I have studied environmental science, alternative energy and sustainability I have become aware of the potential hazards of living near any nuclear plant. Since Fukushima we are all much more aware of just how serious it can get. And this is despite the facts that are being downplayed by the media. If you want to hear about what has been happening in Japan, you have to go to alternative news sources to get any information. Why is this information being suppressed? I think that the powerful people that are at the top of the nuclear industry are doing everything they can to keep their jobs and keep nuclear power from being mothballed. And that is exactly what should be done with it. But we are speaking specifically of San Onofre Nuclear Generating Plant here.

San Onofre needs to be closed - not just because of the number of safety violations which exceed other plants by a factor of 10, but also because we are dealing with an over-abundance of nuclear waste that is no longer temporary and continues to grow. Was keeping low-level radiation so close to high-population centers part of the original plan? How long are we going to have to be exposed to this. Would YOU want to live next door to a nuclear facility?

If Fukushima happened here, we would have to evacuate almost eight and a half MILLION people within a 50 mile radius. Keeping such a volatile facility in an area that houses that many people and has very limited evacuation routes is of questionable sanity. If you think Fukushima was a disaster, what do you think would happen in Orange County?

And it is possible that Fukushima could happen here. We are in an identical position - sitting on top of an earthquake zone that is capable of seismic activity that exceeds the levels that the SONGS plant was built to withstand. An earthquake of that size is expected here by the experts. It is not a question of "if", it is a question of "when" it will happen. And when it does, a tsunami is almost guaranteed. That is what destroyed Fukushima. SONGS is no better protected than Fukushima was from a tsunami. The sea wall that was built to deter a tsunami is pathetically inadequate. I would compare this situation not only to Fukushima, but to New Orleans building below sea level in a geographic area known for hurricane activity. Building a nuclear power plant on a fault line makes about as much sense.

But mistakes can be corrected. The measly 7-1/2% of the state's energy that is provided by nuclear power can easily be replaced by reductions in power usage as well as by replacing it with sustainable, renewable, safe and green power from solar, wind and wave energy. If the utility company wants to make an intelligent investment in the future, renewables are the future. None of them carry the risk of nuclear power. In fact there is no other form of energy that holds the potential problems associated with nuclear energy.

Be proactive! Be risk averse. Be sensible! Close SONGS BEFORE there is a catastrophic problem that you will have to deal with. The people of Orange County - and especially the people of the immediate surrounding area - will be grateful to you for your foresight and good intentions to protect the citizens.

Make a commitment to replace the risk with safe solutions. You are in a unique position to be able to create peace of mind, a healthier community, and an increasingly prosperous place to live.

Thank you for your attention to this matter  
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