

Docket Optical System - comment for docket No. 11-IEP-1J (SONGS)

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re SONGS

I am a recently retired teacher at Concordia Elementary School in San Clemente, the closest school to SONGS. Our school must store pills for the children to take in case of an accident and we have been required to stage bus evacuation drills. We know that there is a possibility of a nuclear accident at any given plant, whatever the probability of it occurring. If there was no possibility, there would be no need for evacuation zones, evacuation routes, sirens, iodide pills, and school drills. However, having an evacuation plan does not make us safe for the damage would already have been done. The thought of having a real nuclear accident is too frightening to contemplate, so many of us seem to be in denial. I am a realist and this is a real danger.

In working through evacuation drills with my students I couldn't help but imagine the scene: The school gets a call from the authorities telling us radiation is leaking from the plant and to prepare for evacuation. This notification is supposed to remain a secret until the school is evacuated. What are the chances it would remain a secret for long, given the presence of our school's parent volunteers present, bus drivers, pre-school staff, and school staff who are concerned with their friends' and families' safety? Keep in mind that these adults, and even some of the children, are in possession of cell phones. Imagine trying to herd hundreds of pre-school and school children onto busses (if enough busses could even get to us), and trying to transport children as young as 4 years of age miles away from their school, their families, and their homes to the Orange County Fairgrounds which is our evacuation center. Imagine teachers and staff trying to give these frightened children their pills and calm their fears even while they themselves are scared for their own families and their lives. Even if the busses make it to the Fairgrounds, then staff must continue the work of trying to care for these children hoping their parents can get to them and praying they have not already been poisoned beyond recovery. Is the certainty of chaos imaginable to you?

Knowing an unrecoverable nuclear accident could actually occur. and understanding the consequences, and still continuing on a course which makes such a scene possible seems insane to me. Allowing SONGS to continue operating is not a course of action I can accept without raising strong objections and taking action. I owe this much to myself, my family, my friends, and the children at Concordia Elementary School.

While it may not be possible to close down every plant in the US immediately, I would hope that you have a list that ranks the safest plants down to the least safe. Using such a list, the nuclear regulatory agency could begin by first decommissioning plants which are the oldest. least safe, most vulnerable, and situated in highly populated areas. This would be a logical, proactive approach to true nuclear regulation and such action would give the public some sense of confidence that you actually care about our safety.

Randal Seech
 San Clemente, CA