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California Energy Commission

Sacramento, CA

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Dear Commissioners,

I am very concerned about living near San Onofre Nuclear Power Plant. My concern goes back many years, but it has greatly increased since the earthquake and tsunami hit Japan. These events caused the destruction and near total meltdown of the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant with extensive radioactivity still being released.

Like Fukushima, San Onofre sits at the ocean's edge with multiple earthquake faults right near-by. It is also in a very densely populated area. There are over 8.5 million people living within a 50 mile radius of San Onofre.

San Onofre Units 2 & 3 were licensed and opened in 1983-1984. Ever since that time the used high-level irradiated fuel rods removed from the reactors are being stored on-site in cooling pools. Holding use fuel on-site was not the original plan. It was to be moved to a long-term storage location. To date no place has been built and there is no way to dispose of the irradiated fuel. After nearly thirty years of power generation there is now over 4,000 tons of this deadly waste stored right there with more being produced with each refueling. With no safe place to store or dispose of this mess, it will remain there on Southern California's coast for many years to come.

The public has been assured that the reactors at San Onofre can withstand a 7.0 magnitude earthquake, but what about the cooling pools? Can they withstand that ground motion along with the tsunami that may follow it? Those fuel rods must be continually cooled with a combination of water and boron. Loss of the coolant would cause immediate heating of the rods releasing radioactivity into atmosphere.

I would like to share with you the description given by David Brower on how lethal "spent" irradiated fuel is. David Brower is a well known environmentalist who was one of the founder of the Sierra Club Foundation, executive director of the Sierra Club, and later founder of Friends of the Earth, and Earth Island Institute.

I heard David Brower speak at a conference I attended on the 90's and I have never forgotten his words. He said that before a fuel rod is placed in a nuclear reactor you could hold the rod in your hands, and receive only a low dose of radiation.

After that same fuel rod undergoes the nuclear fission process it changes completely. Instead of just uranium, it now contains radioactive byproducts including plutonium which will remain deadly for thousands of years.

If that same fuel rod were to be placed on the side of the road and you passed it on a motorcycle doing 80 mph, you would receive a lethal dose of radiation and die in three days!

This is totally scary! And as I said before, there are thousands of tons of irradiated fuel stored at San Onofre.

I for one would like to see San Onofre closed! It produces only 7.5% of California's electric power. This could be replaced by better conservation and sustainable clean energy alternatives. In addition, it should be noted that over the years, San Onofre has one of the worst safety records of all nuclear plants operating in the United States.

If permanent closure does not take place, I ask at very least the Commission call for the closure of San Onofre until all safety issues are examined. This should include the study of new geological data on earthquake faults very near San Onofre which could produce a larger than 7.0 earthquake.

All the safety backup systems failed at Fukushima. The lessons learned from that terrible accident need to be applied at San Onofre, and at all other plants operating in our country. We do not want San Onofre to become Fukushima USA.

Thank you.

Most sincerely,

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