

San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace

P.O. Box 164, Pismo Beach CA 93448

Fact Sheet: Diablo Canyon High-level Radioactive Waste Storage

Since the operation of Diablo Canyon began in 1984, Pacific Gas and Electric Company has been storing its radioactive waste in spent fuel pools on site. PG&E has proposed building 140 casks with 30 spent fuel assemblies in each on 7 concrete pads (about the size of 3 football fields). The cask proposed at PG&E public meeting in the Spring of 2001 were designed for storage and transport. The current capacity of the spent fuel pools for Diablo Canyon is about 1600 fuel assemblies.

These pools will reach capacity in 2006. The federal government has been promising a permanent storage site for high-level radioactive waste since the early 1970s, but no such site exists today, nor is any permanent storage project projected for decades to come.

Off-site, long-range storage is no solution to the nuclear waste problem. Transporting radioactive garbage, whether by rail, highway or barge, would entail added opportunities for accident or terrorism, with added danger to the public.

The San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace has been studying legislation passed in Minnesota in 1994. These laws limit the amount of high-level radioactive waste that can be stored onsite at the Prairie Island nuclear plant. The Minnesota plant will reach that limit in 2007 and then **MUST** be shut down.

The SLO MFP plans to take the similar legal steps to protect the citizens of California. People must not be forced to live with nuclear plants that have become high-level radioactive waste dumps, warehousing lethal spent fuel in volumes far exceeding the design capacity of the plants. Citizens should not be asked to trust a utility (PG&E) so inept at long-range planning as to declare bankruptcy with the storage of additional wastes that will remain lethal for a quarter of a million years!

As our state slowly moves towards a more predictable energy future, it must reduce its dependency on nuclear facilities for economic as well as safety reasons. Ratepayers made a good start in 2001, achieving a 12% reduction (4800 MW) in energy use through conservation. Over the summer three new natural gas generation facilities came on line with a combined capacity of 1700MW. An additional 1100MW is expected on line in the next few months. Over the next few years additional new plants and long term contracts for energy will secure our electric supply and add employment opportunities.

As the events of September 11th unfold, we must also be mindful of additional dangers of terrorism at Diablo Canyon. Initially, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) stated that America's nuclear power plants were secure. However, the NRC has since admitted that U.S. reactors are not prepared for terrorist attacks. The Commission has even shut down its website, fearing hostile forces might discover information that could put nuclear plants at further risk.

Our coastline is too precious a resource to degrade into a permanent high-level radioactive waste site or a parking place for barges carrying radioactive garbage. There is no better time to establish an end date for a power source that creates such deadly by-products.

Tax-deductible donations to help with this effort may be sent to the San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace, P.O. Box 164, Pismo Beach, Ca 93448