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March 5, 2015

Stephen G. Burns, Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Mail Stop O-16G4
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Dear Mr. Burns:

I am writing to request you give immediate attention to establishing and requiring the enforcement of standards for the conduct of public meetings. As you know, from the very earliest efforts to introduce atomic energy, public participation in proceedings as they relate to the regulation of atomic power has been a national goal. Current practices by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) are compromising that goal by tolerating acts of intimidation and permitting disruptions that are chilling the legitimate efforts of citizens to participate in these proceedings.

I understand from communications with the Nuclear Energy Institute that this matter has been raised in the past and efforts have been made to give the matter attention. It is apparent from recent hearings, however, as highlighted in this letter, that those actions are too slow, ineffective, and not being given the attention they need.

On February 19, 2015, the NRC held a public meeting in Brattleboro, Vermont to address decommissioning issues for Vermont Yankee. One of the attendees at that meeting was Ms. Meredith Angwin, a housewife who has been an active citizen in past proceedings involving the plant. Her account of that meeting follows:¹

"Friends:

I was at this meeting, but I have been unable (emotionally unable) to blog about it. Listening to lies is hard. Over 100 opponents and few supporters is hard. Being booed is hard. Having someone shout "you're getting older, Meredith" as I finished speaking is hard. I hope to pull myself together and blog about this perhaps this weekend. There was one other person who spoke for the plant. He was booed and harassed to the point he was shaking. I saw it. Later he wrote long email to some friends, including me, about

¹ Email from Meredith Angwin to ANS social network, Feb 27, 2015.

his reaction and how he plans to have the ability to go forward. It was not a trivial event. It was like Agincourt, "we few etc" except that we lost. None of us will forget it. What Howard wrote below is correct.

Meredith"

The reference to "Howard's email", relates to an email by Howard Schafer expressing concerns that opponents would be doing everything they could to disrupt these proceedings.

In response to the email by Ms. Angwin, Rod Adams, author of a website dealing with nuclear issues (www.atomicinsights.com), reviewed the entire four hour tape of the meeting and summarized his observations in a blog which included a twenty minute condensation of the proceedings.² Included in his blog is correspondence with the NRC relating to this incident indicating they were aware of concerns prior to the meeting but chose not to take action to exert controls that would have protected the integrity of the process because they worried about "exacerbating the situation." By not doing so, they enabled acts of intimidation and contributed to an overall environment that had a chilling effect on genuine citizen participation in these processes, one whose ripple effects will be felt at future proceedings. Providing a safe atmosphere for citizen participation seems a pretty minimum standard. It seems obvious, if this is all correct, that efforts made so far to deal with this issue have been inadequate.

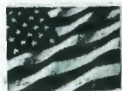
The effect on participants, as evidenced by Ms. Angwin's anguished email, should be a concern to you and every member of the NRC. No court room would permit this sort of behavior, and NRC proceedings should be accorded no less respect. Anything you can do to give this matter your attention would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Paul Lorenzini

² <http://atomicinsights.com/agencies-should-not-allow-creation-of-a-hostile-environment-at-public-meetings/>



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