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Mr. William J. Dirck
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
7735 Old Georgetown Road
Washington, D.C. 20555

DOCKET NUMBER
MOD. & UTIL. F.G.

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SERVED MAY 15 1984

Dear Mr. Dirck:

On April 27, 1984 there was a meeting held between Consumers Power Company and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Also in Attendance, as indicated in the paper, were persons specifically representing GAP, Lone Tree Council, Barbara Stemaris, and Mary Sinclair, all of whom oppose the Nuclear Power Plant Project. Further this group alleges to be "representing the community" while in fact they represent very few in the community.

Was the meeting held on April 27, 1984 open to the public? Or, in other words, could we have had representatives attend this meeting who would have truly represented the majority of the people in the community? If there are future meetings of this nature may we have a representative attend?

The groups I mentioned above are self-appointed or appointed by a very small group, and for the most part are not from the community that they allegedly represent. They should not be in any way considered as representatives or spokespersons for the Midland County community, for they DO NOT.

Their concerns on safety has already been addressed and their statements on economics are short ranged, inaccurate and in some cases absurd.

The County of Midland, the State of Michigan, and in fact, the United States cannot afford to allow a small but vocal group to continue to interfere with the well being of their great Country.

Sincerely,

MIDLAND COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

ROBERT B CHATTERTON
President

RBC/smm

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Midland, Michigan 48640

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Radiation Phobia vs. Nuclear Energy: Are We Being Left Behind?

The following article is excerpted from several sources, and provides supporting views for the article in this issue of the PEI Industry Forum, "Safety and the Energy Industries."

Twenty-five countries now produce nuclear generated electricity. Ten more plan to do so by the end of the decade. The international growth of this energy source raises questions about what, if anything, America stands to lose if it falls behind in nuclear energy development.

America helped pioneer the technology of the world's nuclear plants. Nuclear-generated electricity in the U.S. grew to a record 283 billion kilowatt-hours last year — close to 13 percent of the nation's total electricity production. Eighty-four plants are now licensed to operate across the country, and 56 more are being built. In terms of total nuclear electric generating capacity, America remains number one.

But since 1978, America has undergone a time of national hesitation. For five years now, no new nuclear power plants have been ordered in the U.S. During this same period, there have been orders for at least 40 such plants in other parts of the world, even with the global economic slump. France, the Soviet Union, and Japan are among the many countries committed to nuclear electricity as an economic, secure alternative to oil-fired and coal-fired power, as reported by the U.S. Committee for Energy Awareness.

The national hesitation that presently exists is due, according to Bernard L. Cohen, professor of physics at the University of Pittsburgh and author of *Before It's Too Late: A Scientist's Case for Nuclear Energy*, to an American public which has been badly misinformed.

"As a consequence of this misinformation," Cohen states, "we are spending hundreds of millions of dollars per life saved by protecting people from radiation, while we are disdaining to spend one-thousandth of that amount to protect people from disease, automobile accidents and other common dangers."

It has been found that more than 80 percent of the public believes that nuclear power is more dangerous than its principal competitor, coal burning, which is typically estimated to kill 10,000 Americans each year with its air pollution — some studies estimate 50,000.

Cohen finds this a tragic situation, unnecessarily killing thousands of people and wasting billions of dollars every year and is primarily brought about due to overcoverage by the American public's source of nuclear information — the media (electronic, print and journalism).

More than 100 accidents involving transport of radioactive material have received national media coverage in the past few decades, but the radiation exposure in all of them combined has less than a one percent chance of causing even a single death. There was tremendous coverage of the Three Mile Island (TMI) accident although all investigations have concluded that there was never any significant danger to the public — the media still haven't transmitted that message and continue to imply that TMI was a near miss or disaster.

Another journalistic failing, according to Cohen, is in not trying to help the public understand the dangers of radiation. "The best way to do this, always used by scientists in trying to enlighten the public," he said, "is to compare the radiation being reported with the much higher radiation doses we all receive from natural sources of medical X-rays." The radiation due to an accident in a Rochester, New York nuclear plant last year was a leading national news story for two days, but with all that coverage the public never was told that no one got as much radiation as he gets every day from natural sources.

Cohen believes that journalism is consulting only a

small handful of scientists who have been trying to frighten the public about the dangers of radiation. "Journalists frequently make implicit judgments on scientific issues," he said, "treating them like political or social issues on which everyone is entitled to an opinion. They do not recognize that a scientific consensus is based on vast amounts of data, techniques and experience, and is normally agreed upon by over 90 percent of those possessing these. The public wants and is entitled to be informed of the scientific consensus, but instead it gets the opinions of journalists."

"Are the estimated dangers of radiation larger now than they were 10 years ago? The scientific consensus is a resounding 'no,' but the media have told the public that it is 'yes.' Note that this is a strictly scientific question, with no room for political considerations," Cohen said.

In conclusion, Cohen said that these failures of journalism are costing our nation thousands of unnecessary deaths and wasting billions of dollars every year. Moreover, they have quadrupled the inflation-corrected cost of new electric power in the U.S. making it twice as expensive as in Europe or Japan. "We can only surmise what economic havoc this will wreak in the next few decades," he added.

Will we have to play a costly game of catch-up in the competition ahead? America runs the risk of doing just that — if they ignore the growing international reliance on nuclear energy, and the reason behind the growth.

The National Academy of Sciences has stated that "coal and nuclear power are the only economic alternatives for large-scale application in the remainder of this century." Nuclear-generated electricity is a secure, dependable, economic energy source for millions of people in many countries. And they plan to use more of it in the years to come.

The accident at Three Mile Island prompted reforms in safety, nuclear regulation, and plant operations. Besides plant safety, another big concern has been nuclear waste. An important step toward solving the waste problem is the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 which directs the Federal government to begin the process leading to the permanent disposal of high-level nuclear waste, in deep geologic formations that have been stable for millions of years. These permanent repositories will be almost twice as deep as the Empire State Building is high. The geologic disposal method has been judged the safest by many governments and scientific bodies. They agree that repositories deep underground can isolate the waste permanently.

Japan now operates 25 nuclear units, and expects to double its nuclear capacity by 1990. Japanese companies are busy designing their own advanced reactors, and thus gaining the edge in nuclear energy technology.

This country has a lot more oil, natural gas, and coal than either France or Japan. But oil supplies are uncertain. Natural gas is more valuable for other uses than for burning in power plants. And coal, though essential, can't be expected to do the job. In many countries throughout the world, nuclear power is now supplying a substantial share of the electricity that people consume.

By 1985, over half of France's electricity will be nuclear-generated. The cost of producing a nuclear kilowatt-hour in France is 25 percent cheaper than with coal and 55 percent cheaper than with oil. It takes only six years or so to get a nuclear plant built there. United Kingdom, and West Germany all generate a greater share of their electricity from nuclear power plants than the U.S.

The view of a scientist and the U.S. Committee for Energy Awareness raise the question, due to misinformation and national hesitation: "What does America stand to lose if it falls behind in nuclear energy development?"

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