

from the desk of ...

John F. Ahearne, Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 H. Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20555



Shuck Boyd

4-17-81



Mr. Ahearne,

It was recently brought to my attention that there are two large nuclear power stations that are ready to generate electricity and replace foreign oil but they are just sitting, inactive. These two stations, Three Mile Island Unit 1, and the two unit plant at Diablo Canyon, California, represent three thousand megawatts of electrical capacity idle when domestic energy is needed. Such a situation is almost unbelievable.

The undamaged unit 1 at Three Mile Island remains shutdown, by order of the august body you chair, even though other plants of similar design are undergoing modification while generating electricity. Three Mile Island Unit 1, undamaged and upgraded, is ready to produce electricity. This is costing Metropolitan Edison, and ultimately its customers approximately 12 to 14 million dollars per month! Bringing TMI unit 1 in line would reduce Metropolitan Ed's customers bills accordingly. The replacement power Met Ed is buying is partially generated by oil-fired power plants, and is thus impoverishing the residents of Pennsylvania for the benefit of OPEC.

The only decent thing for you to do is to press for clearance to allow TMI - 1 to be restarted immediately - assuming of course you have any interest in the "public" - in this case those in Pennsylvania and thereabout who are footing the bill for your agency's bureaucratic ineptitude. The NRC docket number is 50-289SP, TMI-1.

Another scandal deserving of national attention is the bureaucratic foot dragging on the license for the Diablo Canyon plants. Unit #1 has been ready for fuel loading for five years but still does not have its low

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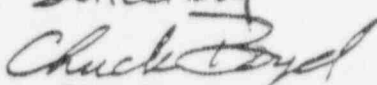
power license. This delay is costing the rate payers of Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), among who I am one of the victims, two million dollars every day for replacement power, and in addition there is the \$500,000 every day for interest charges on Diablo Canyon financing.

These two units at Diablo Canyon are finished, and in a matter of months could generate more than 2,000 megawatts of electricity for PG&E customers. These customers are now being charged \$200,000 daily more than they should be - where is the "public interest" in that?

In addition, Diablo Canyon would reduce the need for foreign oil by 20 million barrels per year, if the red tape was unsnarled. There is a consensus of technical review agencies that agree that the plants can be safely operated. The only snag is the politics involved. To further emphasize this point, two other plants of essentially the same design as Diablo Canyon (Salem II and North Anna II) have been licensed to operate by the NRC, since Three Mile Island had its much-ballyhooed "accident" in which, somehow, nobody was hurt, all the misinformation by the NRC (with its infamous and non-existent ~~test~~ "hydrogen bubble explosion risk") and the media hysterics notwithstanding.

Rest assured, Mr. Ahearne, that I have also written my Congressman, Ron Dellums, and Senators Cranston and Hayakawa, and Congressman Bevill, relaying them this information, and suggesting that something be done about the irrational timidity, immense expense, and harmful oil supply effects of your agency's failure to act on these matters.

TMI-I and Diablo Canyon should be brought onto line immediately!

Sincerely

 CHUCK BOYD
 120 Quintas Lane
 Menlo Park, CA 94025

NLAS

GREETINGS -- A revitalized NLAS is returning to keep you posted in the crucial transition year of 1981. This is make-or-break time, folks. And it won't be easy.

THE "TRANSITION" -- OPPORTUNITY AND CHALLENGE

by Toby Burnett

A new mood swept the country last November 4, say the pundits -- a pro-American, conservative, pragmatic mood; more concerned with economic opportunities and national security than pie-in-the-sky idealism. If our national leaders can capitalize on this mood, it will promise a turn-around in the future of nuclear power. But a promise is not a guarantee. In politics, every action brings a reaction. And in our case, our active support will be needed to even get the action before the reaction sets in.

The Reagan Administration

The energy industry -- and energy advocates in general -- had "mixed" emotions over the Reagan election: Their emotions spanned the range from ecstasy to euphoria. "Wish lists" didn't go to Santa this year: They were sent directly to the Reagan Transition Team.

(continued on page 3)

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

Two large nuclear power stations are ready to generate electricity and replace foreign oil but they are just sitting there. Three thousand megawatts of capacity idle when domestic energy is needed. This story is almost unbelievable.

The undamaged unit 1 at Three Mile Island remains shutdown, by order of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, even though other plants of similar design are undergoing modification while generating electricity (see story on Friends and Family of TMI on page 4). This deserves a letter or two or three from each of us.

The two unit plant at Diablo Canyon, California also begs for letters from all of us. As pointed out on page 5, operation is being held up by bureaucratic foot-dragging.

Letters concerning each specific plant should be addressed to your Congressman and to Mr. John F. Ahearne, Chairman, US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, 1717 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20555. Another person to write to is Mr. Tom Bevill, M.C., Chairman of The Energy and Water Development Subcommittee, Appropriations Committee, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515.

Another matter that keeps rearing its ugly head, in one form or another, is intervenor funding. The story on page 4 should encourage us to write letters to our Congressmen to assure that our tax money is not improperly spent.

U.S. NUCLEAR PERFORMANCE AS OF JANUARY 1, 1981

	Total Net Electric Production (1) (Billion kWhrs)	Nuclear Net Electric Production (2) (Billion kWhrs)	Nuclear Contri- bution (3)	Nuclear Capacity Factor (4)
1974	1864.	98.0	5.3%	55.5%
1975	1901.	160.1	8.4%	60.2%
1976	2015.	185.7	9.2%	60.1%
1977	2126.	240.0	11.3%	65.2%
1978	2212.	271.3	12.3%	67.5%
1979	2273.	252.0	11.1%	59.7%
Jan '80	201.7	19.09	9.5%	53.3%
Feb '80	189.8	19.33	10.2%	57.7%
Mar '80	189.9	19.92	10.5%	55.4%
Apr '80	171.1	18.26	10.7%	51.8%
May '80	178.1	18.33	10.3%	50.4%
Jun '80	190.5	18.36	9.6%	52.0%
Jul '80	220.3	21.17	9.6%	58.0%
Aug '80	218.5	24.31	11.1%	67.0%
Sep '80	192.1	23.36	12.2%	66.7%
Oct '80	181.9	24.05	13.2%	66.3%
Nov '80	183.4	20.75	11.3%	59.1%
Dec '80	198.1	21.50	10.9%	58.7%
Total 1980	2315.4(5)	248.43(6)	10.7%	58.0%

The nation's 67 nuclear power plants in commercial operation have a total maximum dependable capacity (net) of 49,622 Mwe(2), or 8.1% of total U.S. generating capacity(1).

Notes:

- (1) Source: Edison Electric Institute
- (2) Source: NUREG-0023 (NRC "Gray Book")
- (3) Percent of total electric production supplied by nuclear.
- (4) Weighted average capacity factor, equal to actual nuclear production divided by theoretical production if all nuclear plants had operated continuously at 100% power.
- (5) 1.9% increase from 1979.
- (6) 1.4% decrease from 1979.
- (7) Data excludes 1 nuclear plant in power escalation test phase, also TMI-2 and Humboldt Bay.

INITIATIVES, MORATORIA AND REFERENDUMS

There were proposals concerning nuclear power on the ballots of several states last November, each of which has a different degree of significance. The most important to the nuclear advocates was the Maine referendum. It was the only one aimed at shutting down an operating nuclear power plant. The referendum lost by about 2 to 1 mostly because Maine voters realize the higher cost they would pay for oil-generated electricity.

Another important election was in Missouri where a "California type" moratorium, if passed, would have prevented the operation of the nearly completed Callaway Nuclear Plants. Here again the voters recognized that cost of electricity was an important consideration. They rejected the moratorium by 61% to 39%.

In Oregon (Keep Oregon Green - Bring your money, but don't stay) a moratorium measure just barely passed. This will prohibit any new nuclear plant in the state until a federal waste repository is in operation but it does not affect operation of the Trojan Plant. This may mean that the Pebble Springs Plant, which was planned for eastern Oregon, on the banks of the Columbia river, will be built on the Hanford reservation in the state of Washington, if the courts decide that Portland General Electric can build a plant in another state.

Meanwhile in the state of Washington, a nuclear waste measure passed with a 75% majority. This bill prohibits nuclear wastes being shipped into the state for burial after July 1981 unless the shipping state is a member of an interstate waste compact. The curious thing is that medical wastes are exempted - apparently a Curie of medical waste is not as hazardous as a Curie of waste from a nuclear power plant.

FULL POWER TEST - FFTF

A significant, but unheralded, milestone was passed last month. On December 21, 1980 the Fast Flux Test Facility completed an acceptance test of 48 hours continuous running at 100% power. With the Carter attitude of downplaying fast breeder development, this milestone was treated like the initial criticality -- no news and only local celebrations. (I wonder how many of you know, or remember, that the first light bulbs ever lighted by nuclear power received their energy from a breeder reactor?)

DIABLO CANYON - A NATIONAL SCANDAL

One of the most disturbing examples of bureaucratic foot dragging is the long-awaited license for the Diablo Canyon plants. Unit #1 has been ready for fuel loading for five years but still does not have its low power license. This delay is costing the rate payers of Pacific Gas & Electric Co. (PG&E) two million dollars each day for replacement power and a half million dollars each day for interest charges.

Earthquakes are an ever-present concern in California and seismic design has been a serious consideration since the beginning of this project. PG&E has, from the beginning, retained world-renowned experts to ensure that the plants were designed to be safe should the area experience an earthquake. As part of the original design basis, a very large (ground acceleration of 0.4g) quake was assumed directly under the plant to cover the possibility of unmapped faults under the ocean. Discovery of what became known as the Hosgri Fault Zone led to a long series of hearings that have not yet formally concluded. Under pressure and to get the plants licensed, PG&E beefed up the plant to account for a much larger earthquake (ground acceleration of 0.75g) which makes it one of the most seismic resistant structures ever built. PG&E also is modifying the plant (at no small cost) to account for the "Lessons Learned at TMI."

One of the several issues still being pursued by the intervenors (which includes Governor Brown) is the evacuation plan. A plan was submitted to and approved by the NRC but now the state and surrounding counties want new plans which include a larger, evacuation area. This kind of escalation can go on forever unless citizens who want to solve the energy problem voice their opinion that enough is enough. Letters to the NRC commissioners and to state officials should point out these facts:

1. The two plants are finished and in a matter of months could generate more than 2,000 megawatts of electricity.
2. California rate payers are now spending two million dollars per day for replacement power and one half million dollars per day on interest charges.
3. More than 20 million barrels of foreign oil can be replaced each year by operation of these reactors.
4. There is a consensus of technical review agencies that agree that the plants can be safely operated. All that remains is a solution to the political problem.
5. Two other plants of essentially the same design (Salem II and North Anna II) have been licensed to operate, since the accident at Three Mile Island.

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE