

August 11, 1985

Betty Rowland
3113 Woodlark
Fort Worth, Texas 76123

Hugh Thompson, Jr.
Director of Licensing
USNRC
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Thompson:

I am extremely concerned about the Comanche Peak nuclear power plant and totally committed to its never even being stocked with fuel, much less its ever going into operation.

The enclosed news article, which appeared in the August 9, 1985 Star-Telegram, expresses my opinions thoroughly.

No matter what amount of money it costs to scrap the plant, I am completely in favor of all work on it being stopped immediately. We can not afford to take such a serious risk with the health and safety of our part of the State, our Nation and the World!!

I beg you to refuse to ever license Comanche Peak nuclear plant under any conditions whatsoever.

Most sincerely,

Betty Rowland

Betty Rowland

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FRIDAY MORNING, AUGUST 9, 1985

Shut down Comanche Peak

Despite the time and money spent on building the Comanche Peak nuclear power plant, we should bring it a halt. It is not safe.

The builder, Texas Utilities Electric Company, of course, would have you think otherwise. The company says that there is nothing to worry about. So does Dr. R.M. Rubin, public information chairman of the North Texas Section of the American Nuclear Society. They say that the plant will be safe and that the waste can be disposed of.

A nuclear power plant is not safe even before work is performed there. Nuclear power requires uranium. Uranium miners and their families have a much higher rate of cancer than the general population. They also have higher rates of stillbirth and birth defects.

Constant leakage from even a "safe" operating plant emits strontium 90 which causes bone cancer. It emits radioactive iodine which attacks fetuses and causes thyroid cancer. This leakage is inevitable no matter how safely the plant is built. Then, when decommissioning of the plant is due in 30 years or so, there is the problem of disposal. The plan is to bury waste underground. But non-leakage there cannot be guaranteed.

What does this mean to us, Comanche Peak's neighbors? After all, the human body receives radiation from different sources every day.

Small, recurring radiation doses over a long period can cause minor health problems. They can lead to major ones. Large single doses can cause death.



Ann
CHAMBERS

When radiation attacks a body cell, it may pass through with no damage. Second, it may damage the cell but the cell can repair itself. Third, it may damage the cell so that it is irreparable but reproduces in damaged form. Fourth, it may kill the cell. It may kill so many cells that the entire organ is damaged.

Genetic damage happens when radiation damages sperm or egg cells that subsequently join in conception. All cells of the developing baby carry the genetic distortion. It may be so lethal that the baby dies in the womb. If the infant lives, he or she becomes a carrier as well. The individual may experience no ill effects. Or it may alter metabolism so as to affect disease immunization.

Comanche Peak is being built in the same way as all nuclear power plants, as Three Mile Island was built.

Nuclear proponents are fond of saying, "No one was hurt at Three Mile Island." They were lucky — incredibly lucky, according to Boyd Norton, former nuclear physicist. Potential breakdown in any nuclear reactor is possible in any of thousands of valves, pumps, relays, transistors, circuits and people.

On Three Mile Island, at 4 a.m. plus 36 seconds, a pump supplying feed-

water to the steam generators tripped. Others followed. Fission heat now was being generated faster than it could be removed. The system automatically tripped the turbine so that the steam generators wouldn't run dry. Primary system water began to heat up and expand, causing a gradual rise in system pressure. When it reached 2,255 pounds per square inch (psi) — 100 psi above normal — a valve opened to relieve pressure. This was at 4 a.m., plus 40 seconds.

Then, what was supposed to happen, didn't. The valve should have closed itself. The pressure would have leveled off, the temperature would have dropped, and the system would have returned to normal.

But the valve stuck. Other alarms sounded. But because a console light showed the valve to be closed, monitors responded incorrectly.

They experienced a LOCA — loss-of-coolant accident. Without coolant, the core is uncovered. Its temperature soars and it may melt through the containment building — meltdown. Highly radioactive gaseous fission products are released into the atmosphere. TMI missed a complete meltdown by no more than one hour.

Some Comanche Peak plant inspectors have been fired. They are suing to recover their jobs, saying that their reporting of safety flaws caused their dismissals. Texas Utilities officials deny that this is the reason. Former and present plant employees have charged the plant with hundreds of mechanical failures, substandard testing and quality-assurance flaws.

The utility company submitted a

system for documenting its work to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. But according to the NRC, it fails to demonstrate the plant's safety. The company has repeatedly changed its designs and regulations. When a particular construction conflicted with blueprints, the designs were changed instead of the construction.

Only recently has a 1978 report critical of this practice, by the independent Management Analysis Co. of San Diego, emerged. Executive vice president of Texas Utilities, Lou Fikar, who blocked the release of this report, has resigned from the company.

The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board refused to license Comanche Peak in December 1983. Further public hearings on the plant are scheduled in the fall by the NRC for both night and daytime meetings.

Citizens who wish to speak may contact the NRC, Region IV, 611 Ryan Plaza Dr., Arlington, Texas 76010, at 817-860-8100 or 860-8110. Citizens unable to attend the hearings may write either to Hugh Thompson Jr., Director of Licensing, USNRC, Washington, D.C., 20555, or Peter Block, Chairman, Atomic Safety Licensing Board, USNRC, Washington, D.C. 20555.

Across the country 90 plants have been scrapped, even some which were nearly finished. People have acknowledged the need to put safety first. It is to be hoped that Comanche Peak will join those 90.

Ann Chambers, a free-lance writer and former teacher, works at the Britie Divinity School at TCU while completing degrees in English and journalism.