



Seacoast Anti-Pollution League

Helping protect our seacoast since 1969

PO Box 1136

Portsmouth, NH 03802

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To the Editor,

How quickly the tide turns, or perhaps I should say, re-turns. Just nine months ago, you were arguing against complacency and urging vigilance when it comes to safety issues at the Seabrook nuclear plant, yet last week we read (editorial, August 22) that no matter, Seabrook deserves a 20 year extension on its license, 20 years from now!

And this comes on the heels of an article (August 15th) which appears to be nothing more than a one-sided, "happy talk" nuclear industry propaganda piece on radioactive fuel storage and "recycling," presented as if this was no harder, nor environmentally threatening, than storing and recycling aluminum. Responding to all the misrepresentations and half-truths in that article would require another letter or two, so I'll restrict my comments to your more overt opinion piece.

Yes, Seabrook has managed to operate for 20 years now without major accident or breakdown, yet anyone who has owned a car or any more complicated, hard-driven technology knows that performance over the first half of its life is no reliable indicator of reliability over the second half, or beyond. Yet you want us to believe that Seabrook owners and regulators are so brilliant and prescient that they can predict its reliable and safe performance 40 years into the future. And most of the other statements you make regarding the plant require caveats, from the scientific fact that there is NO safe level of radioactive exposure while ALL nuclear plants routinely emit radioactive gases, to the fact that many accessible future reserves of uranium are in less-than-democratic countries in Africa, central Asia and elsewhere.

You do rightly raise the issue of evacuation planning for an accident at Seabrook. Anyone who followed the development of the original plan 20 years ago will attest that it's a complete joke. And given our region's population and commercial development increases since then and in the future, any future "refinement" of that plan will continue to remain a joke. Unfortunately, the joke is on us. You see, in the surreal and nonsensical world of nuclear power regulation, this and other critical issues are considered "not within the scope" of the relicensing process. No radioactive waste management plan or long-term disposal options of any kind for current or additional waste? Not within the scope. Current and chronic operating issues like emergency diesel generator malfunctions? Not within the scope. Inadequate security to deal with sabotage and other terrorist acts? Again, never mind. So the public is invited to participate, just so long as they don't bother to raise any of these pesky issues. Can you really claim with a straight face that this process promises to be "thorough and fair?"

Regulators do claim to want input on "reasonable alternatives" to this plant's future use. Yet they are giving the nuclear industry a 20-year headstart in planning your nuclear future, claiming as justification that 20 years planning time for future plant use is reasonable, while not giving similar benefit to

demonstrably cheaper and safer future sources such as offshore wind and wave power. Perhaps the public interest would be better served by planning and implementing a safer, cost-effective, more secure and sustainable power system, rather than short-circuiting the process on behalf of one particular industry lacking any of these benefits.

Do we have any political leaders or media outlets willing to speak up for common sense and rights of future generations to a sustainable future? They better speak now (before the NRC's September 20th deadline for comments/intervention), or they'll have some answering to do with the grandkids.

Sincerely,

Doug Bogen
Executive Director
Seacoast Anti-Pollution League
603-664-2696