



Stop The Relicensing of Oyster Creek

A coalition for a safe energy future

CONTACT:

Richard Webster, Rutgers Environmental Law Clinic, 973-353-3189
Paul Gunter, NIRS, 301-270-6477

STROC MEMBERS:

Grandmothers Mothers & More For Energy Safety (GRAMMES)
P.O. Box 923
Normandy Beach, NJ 08739

Jersey Shore Nuclear Watch Inc.
PO Box 3085
Toms River NJ 08756

New Jersey Environmental Federation (NJEF)
1002 Ocean Ave.
Belmar NJ 07719

New Jersey Public Interest Research Group (NJPIRG)
11 N Willow St.
Trenton NJ 08608

New Jersey Sierra Club
145 W. Hanover Street
Trenton NJ.08618

Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS)
1424 16th Street NE #404
Washington D.C. 20036

NRC Licensing Board Gives Go Ahead for First Ever Public Hearing on Nuclear Reactor Licensing Extension at Oyster Creek

Washington, DC, June 19, 2007--Today, a federal licensing board for the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) denied a motion by the Chicago-based nuclear giant Exelon Nuclear, aka AmerGen, to block a scheduled hearing for the public to legally intervene in the 20-year license extension of Oyster Creek nuclear power station in Toms River, New Jersey. The six public organizations that requested the legal hearing on the oldest nuclear power station in the United States are Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS), Grandmothers, Mothers and Others for Energy Safety (GRAMMES), Jersey Shore Nuclear Watch, New Jersey Environmental Federation, New Jersey Sierra Club and the New Jersey Public Interest Research Group.

“This ruling shows that we have raised serious safety issues that need to be resolved before relicensing can proceed,” said Richard Webster of Rutgers Environmental Law Clinic which represents the coalition of six groups. “The arcane legal wrangling is now largely over and we will finally get the chance to present our technical case,” said Webster.

“Exelon has thrown everything including the kitchen sink at us to stop these legal hearings,” said Paul Gunter, Director of the Reactor Watchdog Project for Washington, DC-based Nuclear Information and Resource Service. “It looks like we are going to get a federal licensing hearing albeit on a very narrow but significant safety issue,” he said.

Stop The Relicensing of Oyster Creek

A coalition for a safe energy
future

The federal licensing board's reply came in response to a March 30, 2007 motion by the operator to dismiss public safety concerns over the lack of monitoring of severe corrosion at the base of an all important radiation containment structure for an extended period of operation. The company argued that there is no genuine dispute that calls into question their ability to maintain and monitor safety margins for the damaged containment structure. The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) stated that "*At this juncture and on this record, we are unable to conclude as a matter of law that AmerGen's UT (sound wave measurement) monitoring plan is sufficient to ensure adequate safety margins during the period of extended operation.*" The Board rejected AmerGen's request for a summary judgment to close out a legal public hearing.

Accordingly, the three administrative judges concluded that the citizens' groups represented by Rutgers Environmental Law Clinic and their expert witness, Dr. Rudolf Hausler of Corro Consulta, have identified a number of serious disputes including the reactor's remaining safety margins against corrosion that has significantly thinned the reactor containment to a point where the heavy radiation protection component might buckle sometime over the twenty-year extension period. Other concerns focus on the potential for corrosion under the epoxy coating due to defects and deterioration of the coating and future corrosion rate of the component which is all important to safety.

According to the federal order, the decision "signals the existence of a genuine factual issue whose resolution should be based on a hearing." The hearing is currently scheduled to take place in the immediate vicinity of the 37-year old Oyster Creek nuclear power station beginning on September 24, 2007.