

Media Release

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## In the Wake of Japanese Nuclear Disaster

### Citizens Oppose Re-licensing South Texas Project Reactors

Austin, Tx The Sustainable Energy and Economic Development (SEED) Coalition filed a petition yesterday with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to intervene in the relicensing of South Texas Project nuclear reactors - Units 1 & 2. The petition asks for a hearing regarding the issues that were raised in the contentions. Citizen comments to the NRC on relicensing can be submitted until April 1<sup>st</sup>.

“We are learning the lessons of nuclear disaster the hard way right now, watching the meltdown of nuclear reactors in Japan unfold. Protecting public health and safety and the environment must be prioritized in the U.S. and reactor accidents must be prevented,” said Karen Hadden, Executive Director of the SEED Coalition. “No existing U.S. reactors should be relicensed at this time, since metal becomes fatigued over time and aging reactors are more at increasing risk for accidents.”

“The NRC should deny relicensing of the South Texas Project reactors, which would allow them to operate an additional 20 years after their retirement dates of 2027 and 2028. The aging reactors were originally meant to run for about 40 years. Running them another 20 years was not in the original plan and may not be safe,” said Hadden. The troubled reactors now melting down in Japan are aging reactors, commissioned in the 1970’s. Between 1979, the year of the Three Mile Island accident, until 2006, thirty-eight U.S. nuclear power reactors were shut down for at least a year for safety reasons, according to a Union of Concerned Scientists report. The two existing South Texas Project reactors both had year-long outages in 1993-1994.

SEED Coalition contends that the applicant failed to prove in its relicensing application that it meets the needed safety requirements and failed to take into account the energy savings likely to occur as a result of energy efficiency when they examined the need for power and alternative options.

#### **Summary of Contentions – The license renewal application is inadequate because it :**

- Fails to adequately address the Applicant’s capacity to deal with fires and explosions that cause a loss of large areas of the plant. The mitigative strategies for addressing fires and explosions are inadequate to address the consequences of events such as the impacts of large commercial aircraft crashing into the reactors or related facilities.

- Fails to describe the means that would be used to determine radiation exposures to fire and explosion responders.
- Fails to describe the means that would be used to protect fire and explosion responders from excessive radiation exposures.
- Fails to determine the projected decline in demand for electricity attributable to adoption of energy efficient building code in Texas. According to a study by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy, building codes that increase energy efficiency may result in an energy savings of approximately 2362 MW by 2023. Such savings would nearly offset the net electrical output of 2500 MW from STP Units 1 & 2.

The applicant for license renewal is STPNOC – the South Texas Nuclear Operating Company. The Matagorda County nuclear reactors are owned by NRG South Texas LP, CPS Energy and the City of Austin. Austin gets 16% of its power from the two units.

For information on how citizens can comment on re-licensing of the reactors call Carmen Fells at 1-800-368-5642, ext. 6337.

Related documents are online at

[www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/renewal/applications/south-texas-project.html](http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/renewal/applications/south-texas-project.html).

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