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Citizens Oppose South Texas Project Expansion before Atomic Safety and Licensing Board

Oral Hearing Set for June 23rd-June 24th in Bay City, TX

Citizen opposition to more nuclear reactors in Texas continues. On June 23rd-24th an oral hearing will be held before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Atomic Safety and Licensing Board on the Citizens' Petition to Intervene in South Texas Project (STP) Nuclear Power Plant Units 3 and 4.

SEED Coalition, Public Citizen and South Texas Association for Responsible Energy are petitioners seeking to intervene in the proposed expansion of South Texas Project.

"Building two more nuclear reactors at STP is not in the best interest of the local community," said Susan Dancer, a local wildlife rehabilitator. "Pursuing the most expensive and most water intensive energy source in a time of extraordinary drought and economic recession makes no sense. The local community will get stuck with more radioactive waste and bear heavy infrastructure costs if the proposed reactors get built. The existing reactors have not solved local economic problems." Dancer chairs the Bay City based organization South Texas Association for Responsible Energy (STARE).

Attorney Robert V. Eye will represent the petitioners before the designated Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel and argue the admissibility of the 28 contentions citizens filed with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on April 21st. These contentions point out the inadequacies and the incompleteness of South Texas Project Nuclear Operating Company's (STPNOC) combined operating license application (COLA) to construct and operate South Texas Project Units 3 and 4. NRG Energy and San Antonio's municipal utility CPS Energy are both applicants for the proposed reactors, which fall within STPNOC.

"NRG has failed to comply with new federal regulations regarding aircraft impacts," stated Mr. Eye. "These new regulations are very specific and require the applicant to plan for

catastrophic fires and/or explosions that would cause the loss of major critical functional components in the plant. After 9-11, an aircraft attack on a nuclear power plant is a real and credible threat. Moreover, fire hazards represent about half of the risk of a nuclear reactor meltdown. NRG's noncompliance with these regulations puts citizens around South Texas Project in a dangerous position, which is completely unacceptable."

"Nuclear power is dangerous, expensive and obsolete," said Karen Hadden, Executive Director of Sustainable Energy and Economic Development (SEED) Coalition. "A recent study by Clarence Johnson for Public Citizen predicted the real costs of this two unit plant would be \$20- \$22 billion, or twice NRG's most recent estimate of \$10 billion. CPS has estimated the cost of energy efficiency would be 1/3 to 1/4 of what the study predicted these new nuclear units will cost. Wind energy is booming and the cost of solar is coming down, while the costs of proposed nuclear plants is skyrocketing. Although they're required to do so, NRG and CPS failed to fully consider safer, more affordable alternatives to nuclear in their license application."

"With Units 3 and 4, STP would increase forced evaporation by an additional 23,169 gallons per minute and could withdraw that amount from the Colorado River to replace evaporated water," said Dr. Lauren Ross of Glenrose Engineering. "STP's reliance on groundwater would more than double with STP Units 3 and 4. The addition of two nuclear powered generators would increase the average groundwater pumped by 1,242 gallons per minute" Dr. Ross's report entitled "Water Quality and Quantity Impacts from Proposed South Texas Plant Expansion" can be found at: http://nukefreetexas.org/downloads/ross_report.pdf

"NRG has no clue what they're going to do with the radioactive waste," said Tom "Smitty" Smith, Director of Public Citizen's Texas office. "The United States Secretary of Energy, Steven Chu, has stated that Yucca Mountain is no longer an option as a high level radioactive waste repository. Without a federal repository, spent fuel will be stored onsite indefinitely. Why would we generate more radioactive waste without first solving the problem of where to put it?"

The oral hearing begins Tuesday, June 23rd at 9 AM in Main Hall Room 100 of the Bay City Civic Center, 201 7th St., Bay City, TX 77414. The hearing is open to the public.

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