

BUCKET NUMBER
PROD. & UTIL. FAC. 50-400-LA

21406

From: "Judy Hogan" <judyhogan@mindspring.com>
To: "Durham Herald Sun" <jrw@herald-sun.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 22, 2000 9:51 AM
Subject: Please give the CP & L waste storage plan more coverage!

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PO Box 253
Moncure, N.C. 27559-0253
<judyhogan@mindspring.com>
919-545-9932
March 22, 2000

AD

The Editors
Durham Herald Sun
PO Box 2092
Durham, N.C. 27702

SERVED MAR 22 2000

Gentlemen:

I write to ask for increased news coverage of CP & L's plan to double its storage of hot nuclear waste at its Shearon-Harris plant near Apex. Your coverage has been minimal over the last year as this became a concern for all citizens of the Triangle area within 50 miles of the plant. Durham County residents are between 25 and 40 miles of this plant, and should a loss of cooling water occur, due to human error, mechanical failure, or weather emergency, the hot nuclear waste stored presently in pools would create a catastrophic accident, much worse than Chernobyl in the Ukraine, because under CP & L's plan, 29 times the amount of Cesium 137 would be stored there as was released at Chernobyl in 1986. Your readers should know that everyone is dying in the Chernobyl vicinity, and that many babies are born with birth defects, even monster defects, due to Cesium 137. The leading scientist researching the aftereffects of the Chernobyl disaster was recently imprisoned, and the government is trying to make the people forget all about it.

Your very brief mention (3/17/00) of the accident in early March at CP & L's Brunswick plant 15 miles from Wilmington, as contrasted with a full article in the News and Observer, is telling. What happened at the Brunswick plant is just what we citizens are worried about. As the March 17, 2000 News and Observer article points out [attached], "...after the facility lost power because of a contractor's error ... the plant's four standby diesel generators kicked in, but one subsequently failed. That resulted in a 21-minute loss of cooling to the water that surrounds the highly radioactive fuel rods inside the reactor and in the adjacent storage pool. If a nuclear plant loses cooling for a longer period of time, the water can begin to boil away. That can, in turn, lead to a plant meltdown and in a worst-case scenario a nuclear release.*

Those of us who depend on the Herald Sun for *essential reading,* as you claim that you provide, need to have more information about the risks posed by this plan of a large utility corporation in a densely populated, vital urban center. Our democracy depends on the freedom of the press. One would hope that you can freely cover this issue and not downplay it due to a misguided sense of corporate loyalty to CP & L. The CP & L folks are, of course, also at risk, and all the staff of your newspaper and their families. Thank you for listening!

DS02

Sincerely,

Judy Hogan

Encl: March 17 News and Observer article.

March 17, 2000

Waste-plan opponents cite 'event' at reactor

By KARIN SCHILL, Staff Writer

A recent reactor emergency at a nuclear plant south of Wilmington has provided new fodder for a group fighting Carolina Power & Light's plan to double its nuclear waste storage at the Shearon Harris plant in southwestern Wake County.

CP&L's Brunswick plant in Southport had what's known as an "unusual event" -- the lowest form of a plant emergency -- after the facility lost power because of a contractor's error March 3. The plant's four standby diesel generators kicked in, but one subsequently failed.

That resulted in a 21-minute loss of cooling to the water that surrounds the highly radioactive fuel rods inside the reactor and in the adjacent storage pool. If a nuclear plant loses cooling for a longer period of time, the water can begin to boil away. That can, in turn, lead to a plant meltdown and -- in a worst-case scenario -- a nuclear release.

Brunswick's Unit 1, where the loss of cooling occurred, was shut down at the time for refueling.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which monitors safety at the nation's nuclear power plants, said the problem at Brunswick earlier this month was never a serious threat.

"There was no serious safety significant to this event," said NRC spokesman Ken Clark. "The NRC's concern in these situations is that they do not deteriorate into something that might become a safety concern."

Jim Warren, the director of NC Warn, the group fighting storage expansion at the Shearon Harris plant, disagreed. "At Brunswick, a lot of things went wrong which nobody expected or could control," he said Thursday. "The public isn't going to stand by and let CP&L increase the risk of a disaster at Harris just so they can save a little money."

At issue is CP&L's controversial plan to use two idle storage pools at Shearon Harris to store waste generated at the company's nuclear plants in the Carolinas. Orange County and NC Warn have campaigned against the plan, saying it could increase the risk for a serious accident at the plant. They are especially worried about CP&L's plan to tie four fuel storage pools to one reactor cooling system, Warren said. "That means the backup [power] system would be taxed more," he said. "Tying all that together creates the potential for a very large accident."

CP&L maintains the storage will be safe, and the company is awaiting approval from the NRC to open up the storage pools. The Raleigh-based utility brushed away NC Warn's effort to tie the Brunswick incident to the Shearon Harris plant situation.

"I really think they're grasping at straws now," said CP&L spokesman Mike Hughes. "This has nothing to do with the spent fuel issue, and I would encourage everyone who's hearing anything from NC Warn to take everything they say with a grain of salt. They never let the facts get in the way of a good story."

Staff writer Karin Schill can be reached at 829-4521 or kschill@nando.com
<<mailto:kschill@nando.com>>

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the Matter of)
)
CAROLINA POWER & LIGHT COMPANY) Docket No. 50-400-LA
)
(Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant))

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing LIMITED APPEARANCE STATEMENT have been served upon the following persons by U.S. mail, first class, except as otherwise noted and in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR Sec. 2.712.

Office of Commission Appellate
Adjudication
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Administrative Judge
G. Paul Bollwerk, III, Chairman
Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel
Mail Stop - T-3 F23
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Administrative Judge
Frederick J. Shon
Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel
Mail Stop - T-3 F23
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Administrative Judge
Peter S. Lam
Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel
Mail Stop - T-3 F23
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

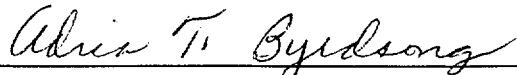
Susan L. Uttal, Esq.
Robert M. Weisman, Esq.
Office of the General Counsel
Mail Stop - O-15 D21
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Diane Curran, Esq.
Harmon, Curran, Spielberg
& Eisenberg, L.L.P.
1726 M Street, NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036

William D. Johnson
Vice President and Senior Counsel
Carolina Power & Light Company
P.O. Box 1551
Raleigh, NC 27602

John H. O'Neill, Jr., Esq.
William R. Hollaway, Esq.
Shaw Pittman
2300 N Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

Docket No. 50-400-LA
LIMITED APPEARANCE STATEMENT



Office of the Secretary of the Commission

Dated at Rockville, Maryland,
this 22nd day of March 2000