Bellefonte Efficiency & Sustainability Team

B.E.S.T.

A local chapter of Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League · www.bredl.org

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GROUPS SAY NUCLEAR DISASTER CAN HAPPEN HERE CALL FOR MORATORIUM ON ALL NUCLEAR PLANS

The Bellefonte Efficiency & Sustainability Team (BEST), Mothers Against Tennessee River Radiation (MATRR), and parent organization Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL) issued a statement asking for a review of all nuclear power plants as they are not immune to the kinds of disasters or accidents that lead to catastrophic releases of radiation to air, ground, and water.

In light of the unfolding tragedy in Japan, the United States must re-visit all nuclear issues--power, waste and mining. Earthquakes are not unusual in Japan. If an advanced, industrial nation with all known safeguards in place can be blind-sided by such an event, the United States should question all its assumptions about nuclear technology. This is the least we can do to honor the brave souls who are sacrificing their lives to control the disaster in Fukushima, and to commemorate the terrible loss of life among the innocent.

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense –March 19, 2011

An Action Alert has been placed on the BREDL and MATRR websites asking TVA to impose a moratorium on its nuclear plans and to halt plans for nuclear reactors at Bellefonte Nuclear Plant.

“There’s no reason to add more nuclear power with its legacy for our children of radioactive waste and health concerns when there are safer and cheaper ways to produce electricity,” said Gretel Johnston, MATRR founder.

“We are hearing many people both in and out of the nuclear industry say, “Oh, it can’t happen here’, but that’s what they said in Japan the day before it happened,” states Bill Reynolds, BEST member. “There are numerous questions that should be answered to assure safety and shielding from radiation which is why people should insist that TVA impose a moratorium on its nuclear plans,” he adds.

According to the organizations, the Chattanooga tri-state region is particularly vulnerable since three nuclear plants with 6 reactors are within 50 miles of most of the surrounding population. A second reactor is being added at Watts Bar near Spring City, TN and relicensing is being sought for Sequoyah. Further, TVA has sought licensing for four more reactors in the future at the Bellefonte site in Hollywood, AL although none have been approved.

In the 1990's the Vogtle nuclear plant in Georgia had a station blackout event. Now in Japan, the ongoing challenge is due to the loss of normal and backup alternative power (blackout) needed to restore coolant water to reactors and spent fuel pools. BEST member, Garry Morgan of Scottsboro, AL has collected a list of numerous accidents and near misses at nuclear plant sites. According to Morgan, faulty and aging equipment has led to serious emergency shutdown conditions called "scrams" at the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant. One of the most recent serious scrams occurred on September 29, 2009, involving the #2 reactor. 50 inches of coolant was lost. An initial false report was provided to the plant operators and the NRC. Upon the required event review it was discovered a critical piece of emergency coolant equipment failed and was not reported accurately at the time of the accident. [Event Report 45391[

In the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Emergency and Serious Event Reports for the 1st Quarter FY 2010, it was reported that from October-December 2009, forty events were reported consisting of serious contamination, fires, security breeches and failed safety systems. Twenty-four reactor scrams were reported, but in all cases the reactor's control rods inserted properly and the reactors were reported as stable. Pump failures, electrical systems failures, high-pressure fluid leaks, **reactor core coolant level drops** and valve failures were the primary cause of the reactor scrams.

BEST and MATRR provided a list outlining why it is recommended that TVA look for avenues other than nuclear power to produce electricity and reduce risk to the citizens in the area:

- The design for the three nuclear reactors at Brown's Ferry is the same design as the failed ones at Fukishima Daichi Plant in Japan. The regulations in effect in Japan are similar to the ones in the U.S.
- Since the actual loss of Fukishima Daichi nuclear reactors and release of radiation was due to loss of power and failure of backup systems, the similar systems in our region should be reviewed and flaws in the system remedied.

- The ice condenser design at Sequoyah and Watts Bar is a flawed old technology that does not give adequate coolant protection in case of an accident in the containment building.

- All three nuclear plants are at least 30 years old and therefore subject to aging. With aging comes inevitable pipe cracking, defects in zirconium cladding on the fuel rods, pump and valve failures, corrosion holes, rusting electrical switches and junctions and failing backup diesel generators.

- Several accidents have occurred at all of TVA's operating nuclear plants including tritium leaks.

- Most accidents are caused by human error.

- All high level radioactive waste is stored on site in spent fuel pools or in casks outdoors. Waste is not stored within a containment building and since there is no permanent repository the amount of radioactive material continues to accumulate on site.

- Evacuation plans are inadequate and the public is ill informed about what to do in case of a meltdown.

- There is concern over the proposed use of weapons-grade Plutonium/MOX radioactive fuel at Browns Ferry and the discovery of secret meetings between TVA & NRC requesting reduced security for transporting this material.

- Energy Efficiency creates more immediate and long term jobs and is the first line of defense against rising energy costs. It is the least costly means of 'increasing' production (by decreasing demand) and can be implemented more quickly than building new plants.

- Renewable Energy is now less expensive than nuclear with none of the dangers to the people of the Tennessee Valley or our environment.

The groups contend that TVA could be at the forefront of a truly clean and safe energy future – with conservation, efficiency measures, and electricity derived from solar, wind, heat recycling, geothermal and other sources along with improvement an expansion of existing hydroelectric resources.

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