

PINION

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READERS' VIEWS

Ask officials to oppose nuclear plant relicensing

In response to the July 2 Mercury article, "Nuke plant applies for license to operate 20 more years," how dare Exelon ask to run the aging dangerous Limerick Nuclear Plant another 20 years. Exelon should be ashamed.

Limerick is already a ticking time bomb, with lax compliance to NRC's ever-weakening regulations, and repeated problems that could lead to big trouble. June 4th the Mercury reported three Limerick shutdowns in one week, following a February 2011 shutdown that lasted over two days. In 2007-08 there were five shutdowns, one with loss of cooling water. Another occurred June 2010.

Limerick is third on the earthquake risk list, yet some systems, structures and components were found potentially unreliable if an earthquake occurs. Flood and fire prevention seals might not tolerate a "seismic event." Limerick, a GE Mark 2 design (similar to Japan's Mark 1), has design flaws which can result in more radiation being released in a disaster.

It's really scary. Worst-case scenarios occur. Horrid events at Fukushima are still unfolding. Past nuclear disasters are still causing devastation to people, animals and the environment. Many things can go terribly wrong with Limerick's complicated aging equipment and miles of 25-year-old corroding and deteriorating underground pipes and cables. Limerick's radioactive leaks already contaminated groundwater.

This is an outrage! A Limerick disaster would cause unthinkable consequences to all of us, yet greedy Exelon executives are making rash money-based decisions to run Limerick longer than 2029. Routine radiation emissions will continue as long as Limerick operates, poisoning our drinking water, air, soil, vegetation, food and fami-

lies. Deadly radioactive wastes, stored in our backyard, will increase, as will threats from terrorism.

Nuclear plants can't be made failsafe. Don't be lulled into a false sense of security. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) "making new rules" means little. NRC doesn't enforce existing rules.

When Limerick fails to meet standards, the NRC changes them. The NRC even failed to detect a terrorist suspect working at Limerick from 2002 to 2008 and refuses to require Exelon to protect Limerick from a terrorist's missile or air strike. The NRC and industry blended into "one and the same," valuing profit over safety.

Who's protecting us? It's gonna have to be you and me. There's nothing more important in life than our health and safety. If you care about the fading planet, drinking water, air, the health of your children, pets, wildlife and food supply, make your voices heard now.

Limerick needs to shut down as soon as feasibly possible. Just because wrong technology persists does not make it acceptable. Ask elected officials to oppose relicensing now, to protect our future.

LORRAINE RUPPE
Pottstown

'Like using chain saw to cut butter'

(ACTIVISTS from A1)

Former members of Limerick Ecology Action, the Keystone Alliance, and other organizations who fought the Limerick Generating Station chuckle about the early claims that nuclear power would produce energy "too cheap to meter."

"We're being metered still," Mary Catherine Lowery of Union Township, who founded the local chapter of the Keystone Alliance, remarks dryly.

But the activists' mirth disappears on mention of the monthly "stranded costs" charge that PECO hopes to tack onto residential bills until 2009.

"It's very hard to talk about," says Jim Gaut, whose Pottstown home once served as LEA headquarters. "I suppose the right word for it would be rage."

His wife Lulu's blood pressure also rises when the PECO bill arrives each month. "It's an affront," she says. "We told them! We went to shareholders meetings and said, 'This is not going to be cheap.'"

"It was supposed to be clean and incredibly cheap and not dangerous to anybody," recalls former LEA member Jim Crater. "Have any of those things materialized?"

Judith Johnsrud, director of the Environmental Coalition on Nuclear Power at State College, notes, "Among the numerous issues that the coalition and other interveners raised, the waste (disposal) issues remain wholly unresolved. (They're) very serious, increasingly expensive, and can only worsen so long as the generation of ever more

