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ALLIANCE FOR NUCLEAR RESPONSIBILITY

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RATEPAYERS AND STAKEHOLDERS PUT NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION ON NOTICE OVER NUCLEAR REACTOR RENEWALS

The Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility (the Alliance), joined by nine state and national organizations, filed comments today on the proposed revision to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) on reactor license renewal.

In order to "streamline" the process of relicensing nuclear reactors for an additional 20 years, the NRC has created a "generic" framework of issues they will consider, applicable to *all* reactor sites. The original version was created in 1996 and since that time, over 50 reactors have been relicensed in the U.S.; no application from any utility has ever been denied by the NRC.

The NRC held only six meetings nationwide to allow public input to this process. When the Alliance learned that only one meeting had been scheduled in California—at a time and location inconvenient to either reactor community—state and federal officials were alerted, and this intervention created two meetings in California. With the exception of two citizens in Boston, California's were the only national meetings attended by more than industry and NRC personnel.

The Alliance questions the fact that only 153 words in a 600 page document are devoted to seismic issues, which the NRC would consider as "generic" and not site specific. To date, no seismic contentions or issues have been accepted or resolved in any license renewal. California has a troubling history of seismic problems surrounding nuclear reactors—from the cancellation of the original plant in Bodega bay to the shutdown of Humboldt and the billions of dollars in cost overruns at Diablo Canyon necessitated by the discovery of the Hosgri fault.

In 2008, the previously unknown and unstudied "Shoreline Fault" was discovered 1800 feet from the Diablo Canyon reactor. In response, the California Energy Commission, the California Public Utilities Commission and the legislature—through AB 1632 (Blakeslee-San Luis Obispo)—have mandated that updated seismic studies be done before any ratepayer funding can be requested for license renewals. When a previously unstudied fault erupted in 2007 at the Kashiwazaki reactor in Japan, it shuttered the world's largest nuclear reactor and has cost the Japanese billions in unanticipated energy expenses. As their task in planning for a responsible energy future, state regulators have questioned potential of similar impacts to California's struggling economy.

Section S.1 of the NRC GEIS states: "...the NRC has no role in energy planning decisions. State regulatory agencies, system operators, power plant owners, and, in some cases other Federal agencies, ultimately decide whether the plant should continue to operate." Alliance Executive Director Rochelle Becker notes that, "Our state has required seismic studies be completed, reviewed and implemented to determine whether license renewal is in the best interest of California's cash-strapped ratepayers. There is no requirement that any of our comments regarding the GEIS be resolved before the NRC accepts renewal applications, which leaves our ratepayers at risk. The GEIS acknowledges state jurisdiction on these issues, and neither the federal government nor the utility should attempt to undermine the sovereign efforts of the California Energy Commission or our assemblyman Sam Blakeslee, whose concerns are bolstered by his own expertise as a PhD seismologist."