

Locals unhappy over nuclear hea

ARROYO GRANDE — Hearings on the seismic safety of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant are scheduled for next month in Maryland.

Local anti-nuclear activists, who have a variety of questions and complaints about recently released Long-Term Seismic Program report, say the timing and location of the meeting is "appalling."

"We can think of no good reason for holding these meetings where they will be inaccessible to our community," Rochelle Becker of Mothers for Peace wrote to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and various legislators.

Becker also complained that the report, which took six years to create, is being reviewed after being available to the public for only two months before the hearings are held Aug. 7 and 8.

"We're still reviewing (the report). We have a lot of questions," Becker said in an interview on Tuesday.

In her letter, Becker said, "the timetable is appallingly fast."

Mothers for Peace has asked for a six-month delay in the hearing to be conducted by the NRC's Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards

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and its Subcommittee on Extreme External Phenomena.

It was the committee that instigated the report. In 1978, the committee, which advises the NRC, suggested that the seismic issues be reviewed, according to NRC spokesman Greg Cook.

Cook said the committee does meet in other areas of the country, but routinely holds hearings in Bethesda, Md. The meetings are open to the public.

"Members of the public, with the concurrence of the subcommittee chairman, may make oral presentations or submit written statements," according to an NRC statement released Tuesday.

Members of the public will not be allowed to ask questions during the hearings.

The committee has the option of issuing a statement, making recommendations or doing nothing at all, after reviewing the report, Cook said.

Diablo Canyon plant spokesman Brad Thomas said he will be attending the hearings.

"We will go wherever the NRC

asks, so we can continue our reassurances on the safety of the plant," he said.

Mothers for Peace representatives don't know if they will be able to attend and are unsure about the safety of the plant if there was an earthquake on the nearby Hosgri fault.

"A first cursory reading of the report shows important discrepancies between the NRC's conclusions and those of some of their consultants," Becker said.

The report concluded that earthquake faults pose no significant danger to the nuclear power plant.

It estimated that the likelihood of a core-damaging accident at the nuclear plant in Avila Beach is once every 400,000 years. Ten percent of that risk was attributed to seismic activity.

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