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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

NRC HOLDS FIRST PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS INITIAL FINDINGS FROM STEAM GENERATOR FAILURES AT SAN ONOFRE NUCLEAR PLANT (SONGS)

The Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility (A4NR) is attending the NRC's first public meeting on the SONGS inspections to hear SCE's update and to question the *costs* of their decision to accept defective replacement steam generators. A4NR will also question the NRC's approval to operate them with this knowledge. "The time to have run the 'stress tests' to reveal and analyze the internal flaws should have been at the start, not after a pipe break triggered leakage," notes Rochelle Becker, executive director of A4NR. Becker, as well as US Senator Boxer and state senator Kehoe were quoted in the press raising these concerns as early as 2009 when reports of manufacturing problems with the steam generators began to surface.

The history of SONGS in the past half decade is a case study of the "Bathtub Curve," outlined by Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) As they define it: "For nuclear reactors, it means aggressively monitoring risk during the three stages of plant lifetime: the break-in phase, middle life phase, and wear-out phase. The risk profile for these three phases of life curves like a bathtub."¹ San Onofre is now in the "wear-out" phase. The original steam generators wore out prematurely, and their replacements are faring no better. "The 'aggressive monitoring' UCS recommends as necessary for aging plants seems to have escaped the list of priorities at SCE and the NRC, and we are now looking a costly replacements and repairs at a time when California can ill afford it," comments A4NR's executive director Rochelle Becker. "When federal oversight fails, hard-pressed residents and small businesses shouldn't have to pick up the tab."

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) approved ratepayer funding for the SONGS project with a "cap" of \$782 million. With reports of replacement power during the months-long outage at \$1 million per day, and unknown costs for repairing the problems, the cap is likely to be exceeded. "The Alliance will be filing opposition to the very first penny of additional funds that SCE seeks from ratepayers," said Becker, adding, "We expected the CPUC to protect ratepayers from these overruns, as they were provided with ample documentation from the NRC that the workplace culture at SONGS was deficient in the years leading up to the steam generator replacement." Referencing the tragic gas pipeline explosion from 2010—partly attributed to CPUC negligence—she concludes, "the CPUC needs to better oversee how our money is spent because we can't afford a radioactive San Bruno."

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¹ Lochbaum, David, "US Nuclear Plants in the 21st Century: The risk of a lifetime," Union of Concerned Scientists, Cambridge, 2004, p.3.