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ALLIANCE FOR NUCLEAR RESPONSIBILITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

ALLIANCE TO NEW NRC CHAIRWOMAN ALLISON MACFARLANE: WHERE ARE PG&E's MISSING SEISMIC ANSWERS?

Nearly a year after the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) called Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) on blatant deficiencies in their seismic reporting, key questions vital to understanding the potential impacts of the Shoreline fault on the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant remain unanswered.

As a follow up to incoming NRC chairwoman Dr. Allison Macfarlane's first appearance before a congressional oversight panel, the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility (A4NR) brings to her attention pressing seismic uncertainties that Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) has left unanswered since August 1, 2011. With her professional background in geology, Chairwoman Macfarlane is well positioned to understand the implications of these concerns.

The Shoreline fault, which passes only 600 yards from the power plant, was formally identified in 2008, and in the subsequent two years PG&E prepared an analysis and submitted it to the NRC. In the media, statements from both the NRC and PG&E generally asserted that the Shoreline fault had been studied and its impacts found to be "bounded by" or less than the more prominent Hosgri fault, which was discovered late in the original licensing process and required costly reengineering and retrofitting. In evaluating the Shoreline fault, PG&E compared it to the standards for the more recent Hosgri fault. However, NRC staff expected to see an evaluation compared to the *original* design basis for the plant—known as the Design Earthquake and Double Design Earthquake—whose requirements are found in Diablo's original license from the 1960s. This is significant, as the NRC staff noted in their letter of August 1, because, "... *the plant safety analyses concluded that seismic qualification for certain structures, systems and components was more limiting for the Design Earthquake and Double Design earthquakes than for the Hosgri Event.*"

Rather than answer the NRC, PG&E took a different tactic and began applying for a License Amendment Request (LAR). With this process, they sought to have the actual design basis of the Diablo license changed: It would no longer include the original Design and Double Design earthquakes as binding factors, but would only use the data and requirements from the time *after* the Hosgri discovery and retrofits. The LAR application remains open, and the NRC's questions remain unanswered.

(cont.)

Rochelle Becker, executive director of A4NR, expresses the concerns of PG&E’s ratepayers when she writes Dr. Macfarlane: “We doubt that PG&E has failed to evaluate the Shoreline Fault information against the two more demanding elements of the plant’s seismic design basis, but find it quite plausible that the company would refuse to submit this analysis to the NRC because of dissatisfaction with the assessment. Absent full disclosure of seismic data, our state’s energy regulators—the CPUC, the CEC and the CAISO— cannot judge the future reliability of Diablo Canyon and there can be no informed or responsible decision making on behalf of the ratepaying public.”

A4NR outreach coordinator David Weisman concludes, “Based on evidence raised in A4NR’s letter, PG&E may take until 2018 to evaluate the Shoreline fault against the design basis earthquakes. Such an unconscionable delay is unacceptable when the consequences are too serious for PG&E to be violating its license's requirement to analyze any new seismic information promptly.”

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