



ALLIANCE FOR NUCLEAR RESPONSIBILITY

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ENERGY WATCHDOG ALLIANCE FOR NUCLEAR RESPONSIBILITY (A4NR) EVICTED FROM NRC-MANDATED POST-FUKUSHIMA SEISMIC CONFERENCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Only one week after the second anniversary of the seismic nuclear disaster at Fukushima, consumer energy watchdogs, Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility, were ejected from a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) mandated post-Fukushima workshop on new seismic ground motion hazards at the Diablo Canyon and San Onofre nuclear plants. A4NR's attorney John Geesman, seismologist consultant Dr. Douglas Hamilton, and outreach coordinator David Weisman had traveled to the 3-day "Ground Motion Characterization" workshop in Oakland, but were ordered to leave before the meeting began by a representative of GeoPentech, Southern California Edison's (SCE) seismic research contractor. In addition to SCE and PG&E, Arizona Public Service's Palo Verde reactor sites were being analyzed

This seismic conference is part of the Senior Seismic Hazard Analysis Committee process, (SSHAC) through which the NRC requires all licensees to update the seismic assessment for nuclear plants in the wake of the Fukushima disaster. Two prior SSHAC meetings, devoted to seismic source characterization, had been held by PG&E in San Luis Obispo in November of 2011 and 2012. A4NR representatives and other community members attended both of those meetings freely and without restriction. There was no indication in the agenda for the current meeting that any different policy would prevail. Furthermore, the earlier PG&E meetings were videotaped and eventually made available to the public. There were no video cameras in evidence at the Oakland meeting.

The NRC has a volume of guidelines for the conducting of SSHAC workshops, known as NRC NUREG 2117. There are repeated references throughout for the need to maintain "transparency" and full "documentation" of the entire process. More specifically, page 56, table 4.2 states:

- Interested parties can view interactions at workshops

"The Alliance is certainly an 'interested' party," notes outreach coordinator Weisman. "The information we gleaned from the earlier PG&E SSHAC workshops produced materials that were introduced during our intervention in several CPUC proceedings. PG&E and the NRC have assured ratepayers and our Congresswoman Lois Capps that the unanswered questions regarding ground motion from the new Shoreline Fault at Diablo Canyon would be answered through this

SSHAC process. Apparently we will not be allowed to watch this unfold, and there were no video cameras in the room to provide the public with archived documentation.”

The NRC’s own monitors were present in Oakland, but allowed the “eviction” of the watchdogs to proceed without enforcing the public observation requirement in their own regulations.

Before the A4NR representatives were ushered from the conference, Norm Abrahamson, PG&E’s seismologist and workshop presenter told attorney Geesman that the decision to restrict the public was made at the behest of the other utilities, SCE and APS. SCE held its first solo SSHAC workshop for San Onofre this past January 14-15 in Irvine, California, and it was also restricted to invited participants only.

As attorney Geesman noted in his follow-up letter to California Public Utilities Commission president Michael Peevey, “I have yet to hear a compelling rationale for keeping these seismic updates covert, and the fact that they are entirely ratepayer funded makes doing so indefensible. It would be hard to imagine a quicker way to undermine public confidence in the eventual results of these studies than shrouding them in secrecy.”

Mr. Geesman’s full letter to President Peevey and letter to NRC Commissioner Magwood as well as the above referenced section of NUREG 2117 can be downloaded at: <http://a4nr.org/?p=2587>

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