

NEWS RELEASE

Sierra Club Angeles Chapter
3435 Wilshire Blvd #320
Los Angeles, CA 90010

MEDIA CONTACTS

Glenn Pascall, Chair, San Onofre Task Force

Email: gpascall@att.net

Phone: 949-248-3183

George Watland, Conservation Program Coordinator

Email: george.watland@sierraclub.org

Phone: 213-387-4287 ext. 210

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San Onofre Restart Requires Thorough and Transparent NRC Hearings

In January 2013, the San Onofre Task Force of the Sierra Club Angeles Chapter delivered a statement to Dr. Allison M. Macfarlane, Chair of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), entitled “Twelve Reasons to Retire San Onofre”. Today as the NRC meets in Capistrano Beach, CA to discuss the current regulatory oversight status of San Onofre nuclear power plant, the Sierra Club Angeles Chapter will deliver two messages reflecting the critical nature of issues related to restart of the San Onofre nuclear generators.

The first message is that that NRC and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) must break out of their bureaucratic silos and keep mutually informed on the decisions and timelines facing each agency - safety issues in the NRC's jurisdiction and financial issues in the PUC's jurisdiction.

The second message is that the level of uncertainty, confusion and contradiction regarding the facts about defective technology at San Onofre has reached the point where a restart decision reached solely on the basis of a dialog among technicians would trigger a huge public outcry.

“The degree of design changes and the level of risk posed by a restart now require a thorough and transparent hearing, such as that provided by the Adjudicated License Amendment (ALA) process. Anything less than this will have a devastating impact on the credibility of the NRC as a

guardian of the public interest,” says Glenn Pascall, Chair of the San Onofre Task Force of the Sierra Club.

“We take Chair Macfarlane at her word when she says it is her intention to assure the public that the NRC process is open, thorough and balanced. We do not believe this goal can be reached without a series of hearings on the level of an ALA.”

Last week Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Chair of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, and Representative Ed Markey (D-MA), Ranking Member of the House Natural Resources Committee, sent a letter to Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chair Macfarlane in which they “urge the NRC to immediately conduct a thorough investigation into whether Southern California Edison (SCE) and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) did in fact fail to make needed safety enhancements to avoid the license amendment process” for the San Onofre nuclear power plant's replacement steam generators.

With regard to the need for a full hearing process, Pascall states, “We came to this conclusion prior to the release of the Boxer - Markey letter, which has increased public concern still further. We see today's final Level 3 hearing as a relevant checkpoint for reviewing technical issues. But just as the causes for concern have escalated, the required process has moved to a higher level.”

The **San Onofre Task Force** of the **Sierra Club Angeles Chapter** was launched in 2012 to monitor the shutdown of the San Onofre nuclear power plant following radiation leaks reported in January 2012. Since then members of the task force have participated in related hearings by the California Public Utilities Commission and the Federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission. More information is available at angeles2.sierraclub.org/san_onofre_task_force.

The **Angeles Chapter** is the local voice of the **Sierra Club**, America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. Its 40,000 members in Los Angeles and Orange Counties strive to explore, enjoy and protect nature in their communities and the planet. Learn more about the Angeles Chapter at www.angeles.sierraclub.org.

Related Congressional press release: [Chairman Boxer and Rep. Markey Call on NRC to Investigate New Safety Concerns at Southern California Nuclear Plant, February 6, 2013](#)

Related Sierra Club press release: [Twelve Reasons to Retire San Onofre](#)

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