



# THREE MILE ISLAND ALERT

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## TMIA Advocates Revision of Evacuation Plans

On September 13, 2012, TMIA's Eric Epstein and Scott Portzline traveled to Rockville, Maryland to make a presentation to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the Federal Emergency Management Authority (FEMA) on the shortcomings of the current evacuation planning for nuclear accidents. This was part of a process, initiated post-Fukushima, to improve emergency planning.

This is significant in that TMIA was on the agenda along with representatives from three national groups: the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors, the National Emergency Managers Association, and the Nuclear Energy Institute.

TMIA's presentation, offered at the invitation of the NRC, was strongly supported with a Power Point presentation showing the results of the

TMIA survey undertaken in 2005 of local day care and pre-school facilities which revealed that a great majority didn't have adequate, detailed plans in place for moving the children in their care in the event of an accident. 63 percent didn't know the location of the relocation center outside the evacuation zone where their children would be heading.

TMIA also called attention to the numerous societal changes since the last evacuation plan was adopted. These included the establishment of numerous adult and child care facilities throughout the region; the blossoming of assisted living and long-term care facilities; the general aging of the population; and the growing mistrust of government.

It was also noted that during the Fukushima accident, the US gov-

ernment was recommending the evacuation of its personnel within fifty miles of the damaged reactors. In light of this, TMIA pointed to four relocation centers on Harrisburg's west shore within 2.5 miles of the ten-mile evacuation zone.

One observer present at the meeting, taking in the emergency management people busily patting themselves on the back, and various safe energy advocates demanding the elimination of nuclear power, characterized TMIA's representatives as "the only adults in the room."



## NRC Suspends Decisions on Licensing

In August the NRC granted the motion of TMIA and nuclear interveners at 21 other plants to suspend all licensing decisions that are dependent on the agency's Waste Confidence Rule.

On June 8, 2012, the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit tossed out a regulation that allowed nuclear waste to be stored at reactors for 100 years or more. The Appeals Court said the NRC failed to fully study the environmental risk of long-term on-site storage when it adopted the so-called "waste confidence" rule in December 2010.

Under the ruling, the NRC will

suspend licensing decisions until a review of current on-site waste storage practices is complete.

TMIA Chairman Eric Epstein said, "This is a victory for common sense and prevents the nuclear industry from flushing its radioactive wastes down the streets of reactor communities."

The NRC on January 17 requested public comment on how to improve its regulation of spent fuel. It also announced it will hold monthly teleconferences to promote transparency and share information. A complete schedule of the teleconferences appears on TMIA's website: [www.TMIA.com](http://www.TMIA.com).

### Your TMIA 2013 Dues Are Due

Please use the enclosed form to pay your dues, buy a movie ticket, or make a contribution to Three Mile Island Alert. Or visit the TMIA website, [www.TMIA.com](http://www.TMIA.com) to conduct business online. Thanks!

## New Reactor at Susquehanna on Hold

A proposed nuclear power plant dubbed “Bell Bend,” for its location along the Susquehanna River in Holtwood, has been proposed by PPL. The proposed reactor would be Pennsylvania’s most powerful, generating 1600 megawatts, almost double TMI’s Unit 1 output.

The high rate of generation also means high heat generation and the utility has proposed drawing 28 million gallons of river water daily to be used in operating and cooling the plant. That’s 15 billion gallons of Susquehanna River water yearly, 4 billion of which would go back in the river and 11 billion that would go off as steam from the cooling towers.

## Susquehanna Units Log Frequent Outages

PPL’s two nuclear power plants located just outside of Berwick have been out of operation repeatedly over the last two years. Most recently, their Unit 2 plant shut down twice within a week in December, first on the 16th when it shut down during routine testing of a valve in its main turbine system, and again on the 19th when the water level in the reactor fell two feet below its normal operating level. Just the month before, a computer malfunction caused Unit 2 to shut down on November 9th, and it shut down again just after it was restarted on

Interestingly, the existing PPL plants at Susquehanna draw 40 million gallons per day from the river. As recently as the summer of 2011, more than 40 Pennsylvania counties were on the DEP’s drought watch list.

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission issued a letter to PPL in June finding that the Commission’s staff “cannot recommend approval of operations at Holtwood, as proposed,” citing the plans failure to address “significant, localized adverse impacts” downstream, particularly in low flow periods, like the droughts the Susquehanna Valley seems to regularly experience.

November 19 due to an oil leak.

Since January 2011, the site’s Unit 1 reactor has been shut down six different times for various reasons while Unit 2 has been down slightly more. TMI’s Eric Epstein said the frequent shutdowns are a cause for concern. “This is troubling, because nuclear power plants are not supposed to shut down this frequently.” He said the NRC normally increases its oversight of a reactor when there are three shutdowns within 7000 hours of operation, but to date the NRC’s oversight remains at normal levels.

## PPL Rates Climb \$71 Million on 1/1/13

While PPL shareholders may still be celebrating a happy new year, ratepayers are beginning to absorb a \$71 million rate increase the utility proposed almost a year ago.

Following the deadly 2011 gas explosion in Allentown, state lawmakers introduced legislation to allow gas companies to add a separate fee to customers’ bills to speed replacement of their aging infrastructure. By the time Gov. Tom Corbett signed the measure into law, it cov-

ered electric utilities, too, and PPL is the first electric utility to institute a price hike under the law.

Though PPL claimed the rate hike “would produce an average increase in distribution rates of approximately 13%,” the reality is that the average residential electric bill climbed 16.5% or \$7.00 per month.

The utility initially sought a rate hike of \$104.6 million from the Commission, so this could have been worse.

## NRC Gets New Chairwoman

The new chairwoman of the NRC is Dr. Allison M. Macfarlane, the first geologist to serve on the commission. She is said to consider the industry’s evaluation of earthquake vulnerability—something that’s getting a lot of attention in a post-Fukushima environment—to be inadequate.

Chairwoman Macfarlane took a mid-January trip to California where she toured the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant and met with plant managers, local officials, and community activists. Heading a commission that has long been dominated by engineers, lawyers, and the occasional military man, she has instructed her staff to “use more transparent language.”

“People who live near a nuclear facility should be able to read the documents that the NRC produces,” she said. “That will certainly give them more confidence of our ability to regulate safely.”

## Retiring Exelon CEO Says New Nukes Not Viable

John Rowe, who retired in March as chairman and CEO of Exelon Corporation, told 50 people at the University of Chicago’s School of Public Policy that new nuclear power plants “don’t make any sense right now.”

According to a report in Forbes, Rowe presented a series of slides comparing the economic viability of coal, wind, and other energy sources. All were trumped by a portfolio that relies heavily on the nation’s sudden abundance of natural gas. Rowe claimed to be a “nuclear guy,” but he said nuclear power “just isn’t feasible and it’s not economic within a foreseeable time frame.”

## Around the Nation . . .

**Wisconsin Nuke Closing This Year**—In October Dominion Generation announced it would be closing the Kewaunee nuclear plant during the second quarter of 2013. The 574 megawatt pressurized water reactor near Carlton, Wisconsin (on the banks of Lake Michigan) will cease power generation and then proceed with decommissioning. John Laforge, a staff member with Wisconsin-based Nukewatch, says the decision will send 655 nuclear workers to the unemployment lines in “phased layoffs.” A Dominion spokesperson said the decision was “based purely on economics.”

**Florida Plant May Be Mothballed**—Duke Energy is expected to make a decision in February as to whether to repair or retire its crippled Crystal River nuclear plant in Florida. The 35-year-old plant has been shut down since 2009 because layers of concrete in the walls of the reactor’s containment structure were separating. Repairs are estimated to cost \$1.5 billion. Because repairs didn’t begin by the end of 2012, Duke will owe \$100 million in refunds to Florida customers under a settlement agreement reached earlier in 2012.

**FoE Arguing to Keep San Onofre Shut**—California’s San Onofre nuclear plant has been closed for more than a year because of unusual wear on the steam tubes at the plant. Friends of the Earth are arguing that the plant’s license should be suspended until California Edison applies for a license amendment because of the dramatic design changes needed to remedy the problem. Edison won approval for a license amendment in connection with the replacement steam generators, but not for the design changes. FoE claims a trial-like hearing process, including evidence of computer modeling demonstrating the design changes will prevent future defects, is needed.

**Nuclear Plants Prepared for Hurricane Sandy**—As Hurricane Sandy was gaining strength and momentum off the nation’s southern coast, the NRC was positioning additional inspectors at all nuclear plants in the storm’s projected path. Additional inspectors were dispatched to TMI, Peach Bottom, and Susquehanna (Berwick), and coastal facilities from Maryland to Connecticut, with still others on standby in the days before the storm. To ensure that lines of communication were maintained, the on-site inspectors were provided satellite telephones.

Exelon issued a separate press release to Pennsylvania media noting that their three Keystone State nuclear plants—Peach Bottom, TMI, and Limerick— completed pre-storm inspections to ensure they were prepared for the storm.

**TMIA Activist Suzanne Patton Dies**—Word only reached TMIA recently that Suzanne Patton died of breast cancer in January 2012. Before the family relocated to Massachusetts in the mid-1980s, Suzanne and her husband, Steve, were deeply involved in TMIA, serving on the Planning Council, passionately working to make the world safer for their children and their neighbors. Suzanne was one of the infamous “TMI 9,” arrested on May 18, 1983 with eight others protesting the start-up of TMI Unit 1, one year after area residents voted overwhelmingly against the restart. TMIA Secretary Kay Pickering said the entire TMIA community extends its sympathy and best wishes to Steve and the Patton family.

## TMIA Friend John Hanger Seeks to Replace Corbett

Former DEP Secretary, PUC Commissioner, and founder of the PennFutures advocacy group John Hanger has announced his intention to replace Tom Corbett as governor of Pennsylvania.

Hanger, who has been a supporter of Three Mile Island Alert, is the first gubernatorial candidate to have written a check to TMIA in the organization’s history. For more info, see [www.HangerForGovernor.com](http://www.HangerForGovernor.com).

## Mangano’s Book Exposes the Risks of Nuclear Power

Central Pennsylvanians who turned over baby teeth to the Radiation and Public Health Project’s (RPHP) study of Strontium-90 levels, may have been in touch with Joseph Mangano, who many refer to as the “Tooth Fairy.”

Mangano, who has a Master’s degree in Public Health from the University of North Carolina, is the director of RPHP. His new book, *Mad Science*, strips away the near-smothering layers of distortions and outright lies that permeate the massive propaganda campaigns on behalf of nuclear energy. He explores the history of the industry, with its origins in the Manhattan Project, through its heightening promotion during the Cold War and its entwinement with nuclear weapons.

*Mad Science* includes an account of nuclear accidents and meltdowns and their consequences, as well as a point-by-point refutation of pro-nuke arguments.

You can buy a copy for \$20 at Amazon, or locally at Transit News, the newsstand at the Harrisburg Transportation Center, 411 Market Street. Mention you read about the book in the *Alert* for a 10% (\$2.00) discount.



*Benefit for TMIA - March 27 at the Midtown Cinema*

## “The Atomic States of America” to Play Here

The producers of the documentary that focuses on the reality of nuclear power and got rave reviews at its 2012 Sundance Film Festival premier are bringing their film to Harrisburg for a special benefit showing for TMIA on the evening of Wednesday, March 27.

In 2010, the US approved the first new nuclear power plant in 32 years. But that was before the Fukushima accident in Japan renewed a fierce public debate over the safety and viability of nuclear power.

*The Atomic States of America* journeys to nuclear reactor communities around the country to provide a comprehensive exploration of the history and impact of nuclear power, and to investigate the truths and myths about nuclear energy.

From TMI's gates to the cooling ponds of Braidwood, IL, the film introduces people who have been on the front lines of this issue for decades: activists, investigative journalists, renowned physicists, nuclear engineers, NRC inspectors, and former government leaders.

Based in part on Kelly McMasters' book, *Welcome to Shirley*, about growing up in the shadow of



TMIA Chair Eric Epstein in a still from the movie *The Atomic States of America*

the Brookhaven National Lab on Long Island, the film explores the evidence for serious health consequences documented by people living in Shirley as well as near other nuclear facilities. Their concerns call into question who can be trusted to provide truthful information and how much influence the nuclear industry has over the NRC and its decisions.

The film inspires informed discus-

sion on the safety, viability, and future of nuclear power in the US.

The event at the Midtown Cinema starts with a wine and cheese reception at 6PM, followed by the film at 6:30, and concludes with the producers fielding questions and a general discussion about nuclear power. Tickets are \$10 each. Please purchase your ticket online, by mail, or call Kay Pickering at TMIA 717-233-7897.

### **Three Mile Island Alert**

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