



Santa Lucia Chapter
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December 9, 2013

Via email: ATTN: Grant Cope
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Senator Barbara Boxer
Chair, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510-6175

Dear Chairman Boxer:

The Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club was founded in 1968 to represent the Sierra Club's members in San Luis Obispo County. As such, before and after that date, we have been closely involved with issues related to the planning, construction and operation of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant.

As we are home to the two reactors in the United States that have earned the distinction of being most likely to experience an earthquake larger than they are designed to withstand, the issues surrounding the plant's seismic safety, and the manner in which these issues have been addressed by both the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Pacific Gas & Electric Company were one of our greatest concerns at the time the plant was built, and have become even more critical since the 2008 discovery of the Shoreline Fault and subsequent decision by the NRC to relax the seismic safety requirements of the plant's license. We therefore greatly appreciated your comment last month that "Earthquakes do not wait until the nuclear industry and the NRC is ready to deal with these threats" -- a point we have been making (without your verbal economy) for some time.

We printed in our member newsletter the recent finding by the NRC's Senior Resident Safety Inspector at Diablo Canyon that "the licensee failed to demonstrate that all seismically qualified [structures, systems and components] would continue to function at the higher vibratory motion associated with new seismic information in accordance with the double design (safe shutdown) earthquake design basis." The NRC's response to this concern has been to state that they will wait until 2015 to address it.

Over the years and in the course of many visits to San Luis Obispo by NRC staff and commissioners to convene "public listening" sessions on the safety of Diablo Canyon, to no effect, the NRC has shown that it is more interested in protecting the nuclear industry than the residents of our reactor community. From experience, we agree with President Obama's assessment of the NRC as "a moribund agency...captive of the industry that it regulates."

We cannot thank you enough for your commitment to rectifying the NRC's unacceptably lax handling of the seismic hazard issues at Diablo Canyon. As we know we don't need to tell you, the health and safety of the residents of the central coast, and the economic future of the entire state, may well depend on your resolve to require this agency to do the right thing.

In gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Christie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "A" and "C".

Andrew Christie
Chapter Director