

To the Editor:

I am responding to an August 10, 2007 editorial by Ryan Hansen regarding “safe and affordable nuclear power”. I would like to say to everyone emphatically...don’t kid yourself and don’t think regulations are going to protect you from radiation poisoning. I would like to share the following additional information for everyone to ruminate on before deciding if nuclear power is safe.

In Southeastern Connecticut where Millstone Power Plant is, my brother was a Radiation Protection Technologist, “fighting the invisible menace” as he referred to it. He was properly certified with the NATIONAL REGISTRY OF RADIATION PROTECTION TECHNOLOGISTS, which has a strict Code of Ethics for safety.

It was his job to test for radiation levels at the plant. He was testing in a building which is 60 feet below ground. It is all encased materials and no one goes there except for testing. He thought to himself “Why would there be exposure there?” He wrote it up and gave it to his supervisor. The supervisor told him to redo the survey and not show it. He said to himself, “I either write it up as I find it or I get declared incompetent for missing it.” He went to the supervisor above his immediate one. The next day he was laid off, they said it was a RIF and his job was no longer there. He had 10 years experience.

Knowing the high radiation level still needed to be dealt with - his next course of action was an administrative complaint to the NRC, determined to let the government get in and make them fix it. About 1 or 2 weeks after he was fired the plant was forced into shutdown and it was later determined that the leak was in a location next to the contaminated building, also 60 feet below level and a design for the pump system was flawed. Gravity only allows the pumps to suck up water 33 1/3 feet and they had to move it 60 feet. They needed another pump to move it the additional distance.

The NRC case yielded 2.1 million in fines and the reactors shut down. Inadequate Engineering Violations -- \$500,000, Corrective Action Violations -- \$1 Million, Technical Specification Violations -- \$500,000, Quality Assurance Violations -- \$100,000. Fines indeed...yet how could they protect anyone from the exposure that already happened?

Nuclear power may be more affordable but the cancer statistics of areas surrounding nuclear power plants prove they are not safe especially for children. Do a google search on “cancer rates near nuclear power plants” to get a glimpse of the real situation. If we want safe sources of energy we must further develop solar, wind and geothermal technologies. We also could expand deeper within ourselves individually and attempt to conserve energy at all levels of usage.

Sincerely,
Lynne Abt
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References:

More complete details of the 2.1 million NRC case.
<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/news/1997/97-180.html>

www.nrpt.org for more information on the **National Registry of Radiation Protection Technologists**

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CODE OF ETHICS

In achieving registration, the Registered Radiation Protection Technologist recognizes and assumes responsibilities due the profession of radiation protection.

The Registered Technologist, while active in the field of radiation protection, has a commitment to maintain technical competence. This shall be accomplished by remaining acquainted with scientific, technical, and regulatory development.

In order to uphold the integrity of the profession of radiation protection implied in this Registry, relations with others (including supervision, colleagues, governmental agencies, and the general public) shall be based upon and reflect the highest standards of professional ethics and conduct.

Registration may be revoked for action considered by the Board to be in violation of the "Code of Ethics." Any person for whom such action is contemplated shall have the right of appearance before the Board.