

The Safe Energy Campaign

On March 16, 2006 Duke Power Co. and Southern Co. announced that they had picked a site in South Carolina for a new nuclear power plant. Also, the power companies announced plans to seek early site permits for additional nuclear reactors at Oconee, SC and at a new site near Winston-Salem, NC.

By 2016, Duke and Southern hope to be generating from 1.1 to 2.2 megawatts of electricity from nuclear power at the site on the Broad River in Cherokee County, near Gaffney, SC. The announcement revives plans dating back to 1974, when Duke Power intended to build three nuclear units here. Duke halted construction at the site in 1983 after spending \$633 million (\$1.2 billion adjusted for inflation); the company cited increasing construction costs, safety concerns and reduced energy demand.

The nuclear industry hopes to take advantage of diminished regulatory reviews, taxpayer-financed incentives and altered plant designs to do what it hasn't been able to do for decades: build new commercial nuclear power plants. Playing on legitimate public concerns about air pollution, electric brownouts and climate change, the utilities are waging a pro-nuclear public relations campaign. But nuclear physics is not altered by publicity, and removing a few valves and pipes will not eliminate the inherent dangers of atomic reactors.

Advocates of nuclear power claim it is an answer to global warming and a means of achieving energy independence. These are empty promises. We know full well the danger of nuclear reactor technology and the radioactive waste it produces. There is no such thing as safe nuclear power.

Twenty years after the nuclear power catastrophe at Chernobyl, we witness the ravaging impacts on the people of Ukraine and Belarus. Exposure to radiation cripples the human immune system, causing illness and death. The plague of Chernobyl persists as the half-lived radioactive legacy of nuclear power.

Therefore, on the 20th anniversary of the accident-turned-disaster at Chernobyl, we are alerting the public to the human and environmental crises that continue to affect the lives of millions of people. We are exposing the inherent dangers of nuclear reactor technology and the radioactive waste it produces.

Further, we call on political and business leaders to steer clear of an energy path littered with accidents and near-misses. A safe energy future means supporting energy technologies which will carry us forward, not backward.

*Earth Day 2006
Louis Zeller, Campaign Coordinator
Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League*

The Truth About Chernobyl

- ◆ On April 26, 1986 the most devastating nuclear accident in history began when an explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in the Ukraine spewed deadly radioactivity into the environment.
- ◆ At least 100 times more radiation was released by Chernobyl than the two atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Clouds carried this invisible poison over Europe, and circled the globe as far as Alaska.
- ◆ The heaviest fallout occurred in southern and central Belarus and northern Ukraine where the impact has been devastating to human health and reproduction.
- ◆ An 18 mile zone was established around the reactor in which human habitation is prohibited.
- ◆ In 2002 the Ukrainian government reported that 84 per cent of the residents in Ukraine who had been exposed to the radiation were ill: over two and a half million people including many children.
- ◆ Fifty percent of men ages 13-29 in the Ukraine have fertility problems: the highest rate in the world.
- ◆ In Belarus, birth defects have doubled since 1986.
- ◆ High rates of infant mortality in Ukraine and Belarus are attributed to the Chernobyl disaster.
- ◆ The cost of Chernobyl-related damages is projected to reach \$235 billion in the next ten years.

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Sources of this and additional information:

Chernobyl.Info at <http://www.chernobyl.info>

Chernobyl Children Life Line at <http://www.chernobyl-children.com>

Rat Haus Reality Press at <http://www.ratical.org/radiation/Chernobyl>

Greenpeace International at
<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/releases/whitewashing-chernobyl-s-impac>

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