



Concerned Coastal Communities Coalition

March 10, 2017

Honorable Darrell Issa
United States House of Representatives
2269 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Issa,

The Concerned Coastal Communities Coalition writes to express its strong support for H.R. 474, the Interim Consolidated Storage Act of 2017.

As California coastal cities in close proximity to the now closed San Onofre Nuclear Power Generating Station (SONGS) located in northern San Diego County, we have a longstanding interest in the proper operation of nuclear power plants. Today, given the closure of the SONGS facility, we have an even greater interest in the decommissioning of such plants and the removal of high-level radioactive waste.

Nuclear power was first generated by the SONGS facility nearly fifty years ago, when the Unit 1 reactor began operating in 1968. Two additional units came on line in 1983 and 1984, generating up to 2,200 megawatts of electricity. The first reactor unit ceased operating in 1992, while the second and third reactors were shut down in 2013 due to premature wear found on over 3,000 tubes in replacement steam generators. SONGS is currently in the initial stages of decommissioning.

More than 7 million Californians live within 50 miles of SONGS. Communities in our coalition represent the front line and are the most likely to be impacted if radioactive material were to leak. City leaders and residents alike continue to monitor and participate in the decommissioning process. We remain hopeful that the decades of work necessary to protect our environment and ensure public safety proceeds expeditiously. However, we remain deeply concerned that the accumulated high-level radioactive waste will remain on the site—either in liquid pools or dry casks—for an indefinite period of time due to the lack of a national or regional repositories. Given the seismic and related tsunami threats that exists in the region, long-term storage of this radioactive material at the SONGS site is simply unacceptable.

The communities participating in our coalition are hardly alone in their concern for the potential threat posed by spent nuclear fuel languishing at nuclear facilities in their backyard. Currently, the nation's inventory of spent nuclear fuel is being stored at the sites where it was generated, including at the 61 still-operating nuclear power plants and 14 shut-down reactor sites. Just as with SONGS, we strongly believe that the hazardous material at these facilities should be removed as quickly and safely as possible.

H.R. 474 offers a much needed path forward for the removal of spent fuel and high-level waste from nuclear power plants. By authorizing the Department of Energy to enter into new contracts with operators of interim consolidated storage facilities, the legislation provides an option for removing this hazardous material from urban communities like ours, rather than waiting for resolution to the endless debates over the penultimate site to deposit our nations' nuclear waste. We are particularly pleased that the bill enjoys such strong bipartisan support, including from California Representatives Doris Matsui, Jared Huffman, Ami Bera, Duncan Hunter, Scott Peters, Ken Calvert and Dana Rohrabacher.


Thank you for your diligent work to advance this important legislation. We are eager to assist you in this endeavor and would be happy to offer testimony or any other manner of support to help ensure its passage in the 115th Congress.

Sincerely,


Mayor Jim Wood
City of Oceanside


Mayor Barbara Delgleize
City of Huntington Beach


Mayor Sandra Massa-Lavitt
City of Seal Beach


Mayor Toni Iseman
City of Laguna Beach


Mayor Kathleen Ward
City of San Clemente