Licensing Update:

◆The Abalone Alliance began the September 1981 blockade/encampment of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant at the time that the NRC issued the Low Power Test License (LPTL) to PG&E. On the last day of the blockade, it was announced that serious design flaws had occurred in the construction of Unit 1. On the basis of that information the NRC suspended the LPTL on November 19, 1981, and ordered PG&E to address the problems raised through an independent design audit. To date over 200 questions about the plant's design have been discovered.

In March of 1982, the NRC appointed the Teledyne Corp. to do the audit after rejecting the firm of Robert Cloud and Associates (who did the initial work). It should be noted that Teledyne, hired as an "independent" auditor, has been previously employed by PG&E, owns 400 shares of PG&E stock, and has retained 16 Cloud employees to complete the audit.

During this period, the NRC was also addressing the question of a Full Power Test License (FPTL), even though the LPTL had been suspended. At issue were the relief valves on the pressurizer (earthquake safety) and emergency planning. A month after the January 1982 hearings, NRC inspectors said that the design audit showed that improper calculations were used to qualify the earthquake safety of the valves. As a result of that information, the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board announced that the FPTL would not be issued until a thorough evaluation can be made.

After the discovery of the initial design error in September 1981, PG&E retained R.F. Reedy, Inc., to review Diablo's Quality Assuranced (QA) Program. Their report of QA prior to 1978 shows that PG&E failed to implement its own program or require contractors to assure the quality of their work.

As a result of all these setbacks, PG&E hired Bechtel Corp. to be the "project manager" to expedite licensing of the Diablo plant. It seems that the decision to retain Bechtel was based as much on public relations considerations as any commitment to address the problems inherent in the plant.

On March 18,1982, the NRC said that it will not reverse an NRC Appeal Board decision that said that the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant was earthquake safe. Also in the Spring of 1982, the NRC reaffirmed that Diablo's anti-sabotage plan is adequate. The commission did say that the regulations the plan is based on need review.

On June 11, 1982, the California Water Quality Control Board issued PG&E a permit which will allow the utility to operate at full power, discharging heated, radioactive cooling water back into the ocean instead of developing alternative cooling methods. (The permit to operate at low power was granted in May).

During normal operation, the temperature of the discharged water may not be more than 20 degrees warmer than the temperature of water pumped into the intake pipes from Diablo Cove. Periodically, water raised to 100 degrees warmer than the intake temperature may be used to clean the discharge pipes.

Radiation and its effects on the marine life was not allowed as an issue in the proceedings.

Design and Construction Errors:

◆Diablo Canyon has been plagued by design problems and difficulties with quality assurance since construction began. Examples are:

March 1978 - 292 defective welds were found.

April 1978 - Defective switches in at least 12 motors related to reactor safety were discovered by PG&E.

April 1978 - Diablo Canyon was found to contain a design flaw common to all Westinghouse reactors.

If a TMI type of accident occurred, it could cause the emergency cooling system to malfunction.

May 1979 - Cracks in 78 massive welds in pipe restraints were found during a routine inspection.

Winter 1981 - The breakwaters designed to protect the plant's intake structure were severely damaged in 2 storms. As of July 1982, the projected cost of repairs is 18 million dollars.

September 1981 - Officials at Diablo Canyon disclosed that engineers used the wrong blueprints in designing and building a set of earthquake safety supports in the reactors auxiliary cooling system.

October 1981 - PG&E engineers miscalculated the weight of safety-related equipment above the floor of the reactor building. The equipment includes five massive fan coolers that help remove heat from inside the reactor building.

December 1981 - PG&E consultants found little or no documentation exists to show that dozens of parts of Diablo Canyon can safely withstand an earthquake.

May 1982 - A report issued by R.F. Reedy, Inc., was highly critical of PG&E's pre 1978 quality assurance dealing with construction.

July 1982 - Brookhaven National Labs issued a report to the NRC which caused PG&E to re-verify earthquake safety at Diablo. According to Brookhaven, the calculations for the analysis were incorrect.

Who is the Abalone Alliance?

The Abalone Alliance is a coalition of antinuclear/safe energy groups throughout California. It was formed in 1977 by people committed to stopping nuclear power through public education and nonviolent direct action. Currently, the Alliance includes 60 grass roots organizations. In addition, there is a statewide Abalone Alliance office in San Francisco and the Diablo Project Office in San Luis Obispo.

The Alliance has held numerous educational campaigns, workshops, teach-ins and rallies. There have been three major nonviolent direct actions at the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, in 1977, 1978 and 1981. At the last action more than 4,000 people participated in the blockade and approximately 1900 were arrested.

This fact sheet was prepared by the Abalone Alliance Diablo Project Office. The Diablo Project Office was formed in the Spring of 1979 and coordinated the June 30th 1979 Rally and the 1981 Blockade of Diablo Canyon. In addition, this office has facilitated statewide outreach on Diablo and sent out regular Diablo updates.

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All contributions should be made payable to the Diablo Project Office. (address below)

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Please return to:

The Abalone Alliance Diablo Project Office
805 543-6614
452 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401