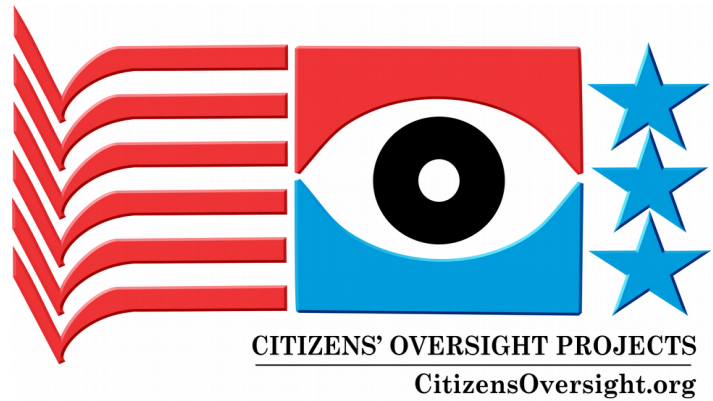


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March 21, 2018



**PRESS RELEASE AND MEDIA ADVISORY – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Citizens' Oversight's NRC Petition to Improve Nuclear Waste Storage Safety (HELMS) Accepted**

**To Be Published in Federal Register on March 22;  
75-day Comment Period Also Commencing**

**Proposed “HELMS” Storage plan requires 1,000 year design life rather than measly current 40-year life such as those in use at San Onofre**

### **MEDIA ADVISORY**

**What:** Community Engagement Panel (CEP) meeting hosted by Southern California Edison regarding the San Onofre decommissioning and spent fuel situation;  
Ray Lutz to Livestream at 4:15; Interviews available.

**When:** March 22, 2018 (Livestream at 4:15; formal meeting: 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm)

**Where:** Laguna Hills Community Center, 25555 Alicia Parkway Laguna Hills, CA 92653

LAGUNA HILLS, CA (2018-03-21) -- Citizens Oversight, the organization that negotiated a plan of action to move the waste from San Onofre, announced today that the formal petition submitted on January 2, 2018 to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has successfully crossed the initial hurdle, with an abstract of the filing to be published in the Federal Register on March 22, and an official 75-day comment period to commence at that time. The petition is a legal action filed under NRC Regulations section 2.802, regarding “Part 72” regulations that govern how the nuclear industry handles spent nuclear fuel.

The basis for the proposed changes is established by the HELMS proposal, also part of the

submission, meaning Hardened, Extended-life, Local, Monitored, Surface storage. HELMS requires a design life for safe containment of toxic nuclear spent fuel of 1,000 years rather than the current requirement of only 40 years, despite the reality that the spent fuel will likely remain on the surface for at least 200 years, and according to the NRC “Waste Confidence” plan, “indefinitely.”

Ray Lutz, Founder of Citizens Oversight said, “This proposal dovetails with our recently negotiated settlement to move the 3.6 million pounds of waste from San Onofre to a safer place. We need to ensure that the destination for this waste and every other location where waste is stored meets prudent and reasonable standards. That means it must be designed for the long term and not just for a 40-year time horizon. We are only asking that the NRC deal with a fundamental inconsistency in their own regulations. They now allow indefinite surface storage all over the country, but their regulations only mandate a 40-year design life.”

Lutz stressed that the HELMS petition before the NRC will likely not affect the waste at San Onofre unless the project to move the waste to another place fails to meet that objective. “The HELMS proposal is specifically suited to address concerns at any Consolidated Interim Storage (CIS) site where the San Onofre spent fuel will likely wind up,” said Lutz.

“The Yucca Mountain facility, even if open today, requires – according to the published plan – active ventilation with big fans for about 150 years, ridiculous idea because that effectively places the spent fuel on the surface for quite a long time just so it can cool. As a consequence, there should be no rush to open Yucca Mountain, and in fact we should look to see if there are better places for this spent fuel waste during this 150-year cooling time.”

The HELMS proposal suggests that the current relatively thin (5/8” or less) canisters be enclosed in a much thicker outer shell, which can then preserve the internal canister from corrosion and other deterioration. Also, the outer shell can be easily replaced without a fuel pool or hot cell, and any cracks or other breach of the outer shell can be easily detected using 7/24 monitoring of the internal pressure rather than using occasional robotic inspections that have never been proven to work.

Lutz continued, “We learned from the Exxon-Valdez disaster that it was prudent to use dual-wall oil tankers. Let’s learn the hard lesson and use dual-wall casks rather than these ridiculous thin single-wall cans for high-level nuclear waste, BEFORE we have an accident.”

The formal letter from the NRC accepting the petition and the abstract to appear in the Federal Register are included as companion documents with this press release, along with a Handout which will be distributed to attendees at the March 22, CEP meeting.

The HELMS document and the NRC filing can be found on this web page:  
<http://copswiki.org/Common/HelmsProposal>

Public Support Petition is on this page:  
<http://copswiki.org/Common/HelmsPetition>

Comments will be accepted on the NRC website at this link during the 75-day comment period. <https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NRC-2018-0017>

Ray Lutz is available to be scheduled for media interviews and will attend the upcoming Community Engagement Panel (CEP) meeting on March 22, 2018, at the Laguna Hills Community Center, 25555 Alicia Parkway Laguna Hills, CA 92653 (Livestream at 4:15; formal meeting: 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm)

**LESSON LEARNED??**

**Before Exxon Valdez disaster, oil tankers had Single hull**

**1989 Oil spill devastated Prince William Sound**

**Law passed to mandate double hulls**

**Now:**

**Outside Air**

**Nuke Waste**

**Single Wall 5/8" or less**

**Double Wall limits corrosion**

**U.S. Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installations (ISFSI)**

**70+ NUKE WASTE DANGER ZONES**

**All Near Precious Water Resources**

**Let's avoid a catastrophe: double wall design + local surface storage, away from water, 7/24 electronic monitoring**

**SIGN THE HELMS PETITION**  
[CitizensOversight.org](http://CitizensOversight.org)

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