



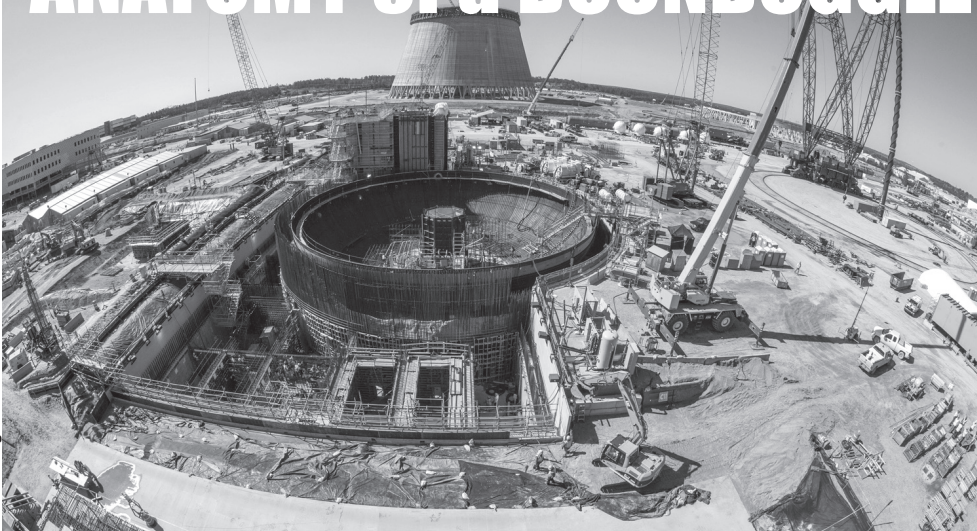
Nuclear Watch Tower

“there must be some kind of way out of here . . .”

www.nonukesyall.org

NUCLEAR WATCH SOUTH news | SUMMER 2014

CORPORATE WELFARE MEETS PLANT VOGTLE ANATOMY of a BOONDOGGLE



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WALL STREET USES THE TERM “utility death spiral” to describe the fate it foresees for utilities with Georgia Power’s 20th-century business model. Historic low prices for solar and wind power are promoting record-shattering growth rates for renewable sources of electricity and ushering the way for a new decentralized power grid. The day of behemoth coal and nuclear plants has passed and “woe” says Wall Street to those utilities out of step with the changing times.

Georgia and South Carolina are now the only places in the U.S. constructing reactors for the defunct “nuclear renaissance.” It is no small coincidence that they are also the only states charging Construction Work in Progress (CWIP) taxes, that is, advance payment for nuclear construction costs. Georgia Power also parlayed its CWIP bonanza into a \$6.5 billion tax-free, interest-free loan from the U.S. Treasury via Department of Energy loan guarantees — your tax dollars funding corporate welfare.

Under construction since 2010, the Vogtle reactors are nearly two years behind schedule and \$2 billion over budget. Construction cost numbers are fuzzy because of ongoing billion-dollar lawsuits, and undelivered (therefore uninvoiced)

reactor parts. The inability to get parts, and parts that don’t fit, are driving the delay which is estimated to add \$2 million per day to construction costs.

Nuclear Watch South intervened at the Georgia Public Service Commission in the 2013 Vogtle Construction Review and presented expert economic analysis of 10 years of Georgia Power’s annual report data. It revealed two significant trends: 1) electricity sales are flat and 2) Georgia Power is using barely more than half its existing generating capacity. Georgia Power’s 4.1% annual growth forecasts have simply not materialized and Vogtle is simply not needed.

Nuclear Watch South is calling for the Vogtle construction site to be mothballed until a market for Vogtle’s power exists.

Visit Nuclear Watch South’s website, nonukesyall.org to learn more about Vogtle. Find action links to stop CWIP and send e-mails to the Georgia Public Service Commissioners. — Glenn Carroll

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NIX MOX

The end of MOX?!

CONGRESS HAS REDUCED MOX funding for two years in a row and now President Obama is on the case, budgeting just enough to place the MOX construction site into “cold standby” and study alternatives. Southern lawmakers have gone to bat for the perennial pork project, and Obama is threatening to veto the fiscal year 2015 budget if Congress persists in attempts to reinstate funding for MOX construction.

Nuclear Watch South has done its part, conducting a legal intervention before the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for the past 13 years to block a license for the experimental plutonium fuel factory called “MOX.” The elaborate and expensive MOX program, which is now 15 years behind schedule, 750% over budget and still only 60% complete, is supposed to secure the nation’s excess weapons-grade plutonium by remanufacturing the plutonium into reactor fuel and irradiating the fuel in commercial reactors, thus creating a high-radiation barrier to prevent theft of the plutonium and diversion into a nuclear weapon.

Nuclear Watch South’s legal intervention is now under appeal because the NRC staff recommended licensing MOX despite the absence of physical plutonium inventory procedures which meet U.S. regulations.

Dr. Edwin S. Lyman, physicist with Union of Concerned Scientists has served as expert witness for the intervention. Dr.

Lyman asserts, “Converting this plutonium to a form that would be harder to steal or reuse in nuclear weapons is an essential long-term goal. But the MOX strategy would have greatly increased near-term risks by making it easier for terrorists to steal plutonium during processing, transport or storage at reactors.”

The MOX factory is within the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) nuclear weapons reservation Savannah River Site (SRS) and across the Savannah River from Georgia Power’s Plant Vogtle reactors.

DOE selected MOX as the disposition path for 50 tons of excess plutonium despite the obvious benefits of plutonium immobilization, that is, simply treating the plutonium as waste and using highly radioactive liquid tank wastes (left over from manufacturing plutonium in the first place) stored at SRS to provide a high-

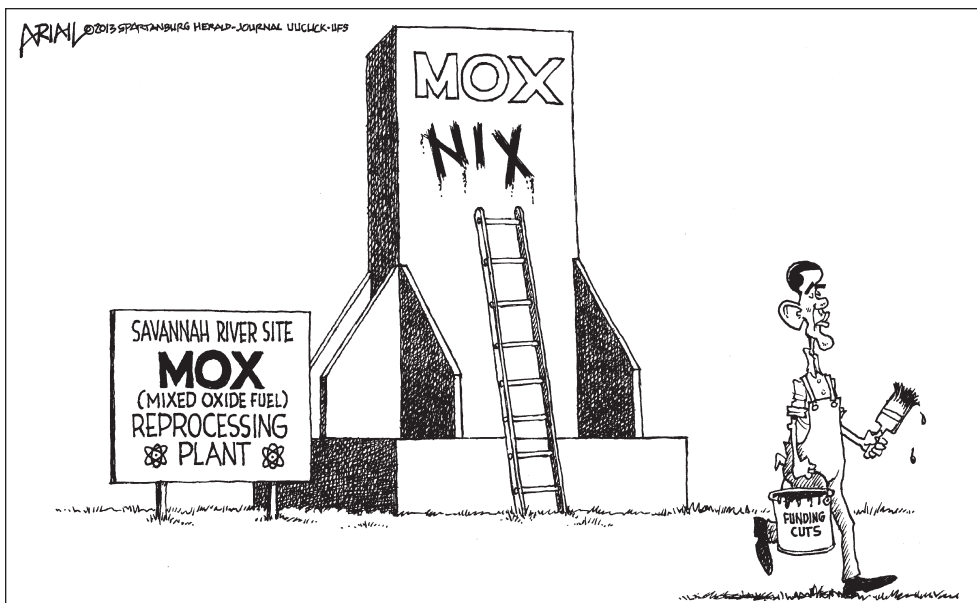
radiation barrier. The liquid radioactive waste is being cast into massive, radioactive glass logs and kept in vaults at SRS to await eventual transfer to a national repository.

CB&I are the contractors constructing the MOX boondoggle, Georgia Power’s Vogtle 3 & 4 reactors, and also two reactors at V.C. Summer in South Carolina. The same problems of substandard rebar, unauthorized field design changes, and faulty parts have plagued all three construction sites.

Test MOX fuel was loaded into Duke Power reactors in South Carolina but Duke aborted the test in 2008 and quit the MOX program. Since then, DOE has failed to convince any other reactor owners to sign up for the MOX mission.

The estimated cost for MOX has soared from \$4 billion to \$30 billion.

— Glenn Carroll



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