

# PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Disaster at Fukushima to be Remembered: March 11 Anniversary Rally / Protest at San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS)**

### **Faulty SONGS Reactors “Falling Apart,” Subject to Earthquake and Tsunami Risks, and should be Decommissioned**

#### **EVENT DETAILS:**

Date/Time: March 11, 2012. Gather at 12 noon. March starts at 12:30. Rally 1pm to 3pm.  
Location: Rally: 1:00 p.m. near South Gate of the SONGS facility  
Directions: I-5 to Basilone Rd exit, ~2 miles south.  
March: 12:30 p.m. starting at gate of San Onofre State Beach (~1/2 mile)  
Parking: Available at San Onofre State Beach, \$15 day use fee.  
Buses: Seats on buses from Balboa Park (Park Ave at Presidents Way) or from Oceanside Transit Center are \$10 each (\$11.54 for tickets purchased with credit cards online.)  
Reserve at <http://sanonofreprotest.eventbrite.com> or call 619-501-1031 for questions.  
Speakers: Keynote speakers are being confirmed. Speakers from Fukushima may be on hand.  
Details: See <http://citizenoversight.org>, click "M11 San Onofre Protest"

February 20, 2012 (SAN ONOFRE) – Activists from San Diego to Eureka will converge at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS,) just south of San Clemente, on the first anniversary of the devastating Fukushima disaster, March 11, 2012. The peaceful protest will include a march from the San Onofre State Beach to a point just south of the SONGS facility.

The objective of the event is two-pronged, both to commemorate the ongoing disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi Power plant that started one year ago -- with three reactors still in full “level 7” meltdown -- and to push for closure of the dangerous San Onofre plant. No attempt will be made to encroach on the secure boundaries of the facility.

“The similarity between Fukushima and San Onofre is stunning,” said Raymond Lutz, former congressional candidate, engineer and National Coordinator of Citizens' Oversight Projects. “The two plants are not identical, but San Onofre -- originally built to withstand only a magnitude 6.0 earthquake -- was retrofitted to withstand only a 7.0 earthquake. The seawall at San Onofre is only 14 feet tall from high tide (30 feet from low-low tide). But the real danger is stark: the Japanese earthquake was a magnitude 9.0

and tsunamis peaked at 133 feet. It is only a matter of time before San Onofre is also in a full meltdown, just like Fukushima, and will devastate this area, force evacuation of millions of people, and lead to many untimely deaths. We can't let that happen.”

Despite the earthquake, tsunami, and terrorist risks, the undoing of the San Onofre plant may be due to internal problems. After spending \$640 million to replace the steam generators just 18 months ago, operators thought the plant would run for another 10 to 20 years. Instead, hundreds of heat transfer tubes are exhibiting untimely thinning, baffling experts. The public only found out about the thinning tubes after the unexpected radioactive steam release last month forced management to explain why the entire plant was shut down.

“At some point, the San Onofre plant must be decommissioned. We believe that time is now,” said Gene Stone, of Residents Organized for a Safe Environment in San Clemente. “While the plant is shut down for maintenance, we believe this is the right time to start the decommissioning process for the safety of the workers at the plant and the community at large. We must do the right thing now and not put the California economy at risk. Let's not spend one dime more on any more retrofits.”

Problems at the plant are not all technical in nature. Workers know they will lose their job if they blow the whistle to the public about any safety concerns. This culture of fear at the plant does not improve safety, and to top it off, there is no labor contract with nuclear engineers who have the responsibility to operate the plant safely.

"Despite all the threats, we are happy to see that workers did the right thing and shut down the plant after the steam release," said Carol Jahnkow, an activist from Encinitas. "We're not here to hurt the workers. We're on their side."

Supporters of plant shutdown say power companies like Edison and Sempra Energy should actually guarantee workers jobs just to make sure workers won't continue operating a plant like San Onofre that should be shut down for safety reasons.

Although management says workers will be left jobless if the plant is decommissioned, just the opposite is more likely the case. Many people will continue to be employed for decades during decommissioning, and studies show that the renewable energy sector provides five times more jobs than traditional fossil fuel or nuclear energy plants.

Many people support nuclear energy as a viable carbon-free alternative to fossil fuels. “We hear all the time that nuclear plants are 'carbon neutral', but just the opposite is the case when you consider the entire fuel cycle, which also has severe impacts to the environment during mining, purification and disposal," Lutz said. "Disposal is perhaps the most problematic with no clear solution at hand and spent nuclear fuel piling up at nuclear plants across the country. The fact that we continue to operate these plants with the knowledge that they can devastate the area, kill many thousands of people, contaminate the soil, ocean and air is quite remarkable.”

Each nuclear plant has to be paired with a large fossil-fuel plant to provide power when the plants are shut down for frequent maintenance. The net result is a solution that is far from carbon-free.

Event promoters say that we should follow the example of Germany and work to decommission all nuclear energy plants nationwide and move immediately to renewable energy sources.

In remembrance of the Fukushima disaster, a number of speakers from the Fukushima area have been invited to speak about their experience.

A related event will occur on Saturday, March 10, 2012, 6:00pm until 9:00pm at the San Clemente Community Center, including the screening of the film "Fukushima Never Again" and a candlelight procession on Avenida Del Mar to honor the natural and man-made disaster at Fukushima. See <http://www.facebook.com/events/381660571861509/> for details.

Residents in San Clemente are concerned about the lack of radiation monitoring of SONGS, something that should be mandated by the NRC but is not.

On March 11, 2011, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake occurred 43 miles off the shore of Japan at a depth of 20 miles, resulting in tsunami waves up to 133ft in height and resulting in level 7 meltdowns in three of the reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, which are still ongoing. Significant radioactive releases occurred, devastating the agriculture and fishing in the area, and exposing the population to radiation. One of the primary objectives of the event is to fully describe the status of this event and to reveal the inherent dangers of any nuclear reactor, particularly one subject to both earthquake and tsunami risks, like SONGS.

According to <http://www.valleypost.org/node/164>, on June 22, 1980, about 15,000 people attended a protest near the San Onofre nuclear power plant.

Endorsers to date:

- R.O.S.E. Residents Organized for A Safe Environment (San Clemente)
- Citizens' Oversight Projects
- Peace Resource Center of San Diego
- SOS (San Onofre Safety)
- San Clemente Green
- Talk Nukes
- San Diego Coalition for Peace and Justice
- Ocean Outfall
- Occupy Encinitas
- Green Party of Orange County and San Diego County
- San Diego Puppet Insurgency
- APRL Animal Protection and Rescue League
- Activist San Diego
- North County Forum
- San Diego Artivistas
- Committee Opposed to Militarism and the Draft
  
- Dick Eiden for Congress 2012
- Jerry Tetalman, Democratic candidate for Congress in the CA 49th

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