SONGS CEP Compilation of Public Email Communications

September 8 thru November 4, 2025

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1. For Awareness: A Business Insider Video – You're Being Lied To About Nuclear Waste

From: Lorraine Quinn Sandstrom
Sent: Tuesday, November 4, 2025 4:21 PM
To: Daniel T. Stetson; Victor Cabral; Victor Cabral; Martha McNicholas; Michelle Anderson; Mike Balsamo; Garry Brown; Jim Desmond; Katrina Foley; Rob Howard; Dan Whitley; Scott Kibbey; Val Macedo; Marni Magda; Lisa Davis; Ted Quinn; John Taylor; Mel Vernon; Michael Villar; Kelvin Barrios; Alyssa Napuri; Mark Enmeier; Hunter McDonald; John Gabbard; Mike Sappingfield; Ken Schultz
Cc: Manuel Camargo
Subject: For Awareness: A Business Insider Video - You're Being Lied To About Nuclear Waste

Hello CEP Members and Alternates,

I write to share an excellent video from Business Insider producer Elizabeth McCauley and featuring Tom Isaacs, Senior Advisor, Nuclear Threat Initiative.

Nearly 80 years of nuclear waste in the US is currently stranded — stuck in "temporary" storage sites without a permanent place to go.

How big of a problem is this? And could recycling this waste solve the problem? Business Insider producer Elizabeth McCauley sifts through the noise and talks to experts to find out the truth.

Search only for Business Insider video "your being lied to about nuclear waste

You're Being Lied To About Nuclear Waste | Truth Complex

YouTube · Business Insider

335.8K+ views · 3 weeks ago



Scientists have known the best way to permanently dispose of the most dangerous nuclear waste for more than 50 years.

Best Regards,

Lorraine Sandstrom

Community Affairs and Relations, Senior Specialist

Community Engagement Panel (CEP) Management and Stakeholder Engagement (DA Complex B)

Southern California Edison, San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS)

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2. For Awareness: Articles by SC Times re: Oct. 16 CEP Seminar and OC Register re: Oct. 22 Spent Fuel Solutions Seminar

From: Lorraine Quinn Sandstrom
Sent: Thursday, October 30, 2025 11:10 AM
To: Daniel T. Stetson; Victor Cabral; Victor Cabral; Martha McNicholas; Michelle Anderson; Mike Balsamo; Garry Brown; Jim Desmond; Katrina Foley; Rob Howard; Dan Whitley; Scott Kibbey; Val Macedo; Marni Magda; Lisa Davis; Ted Quinn; John Taylor; Mel Vernon; Michael Villar; Kelvin Barrios; Alyssa Napuri; Mark Enmeier; Hunter McDonald; John Gabbard; Mike Sappingfield; Ken Schultz
Cc: Manuel Camargo
Subject: For Awareness: Two Recent Articles by San Clemente Times re: Oct. 16 CEP Seminar and OC Register re: Oct. 22 Spent Fuel Solutions Webinar with Rod Baltzer, Chief Executive of Deep Isolation

Dear CEP Members and Alternates,

I write to share two recent articles regarding the CEP Educational Seminar on October 16, and the Spent Fuel Solutions Webinar on October 22, with guest speaker Rod Baltzer, chief executive of Deep Isolation (a company that hopes to commercialize nuclear waste disposal) and chair of the U.S. Nuclear Industry Council's Back-End Working Group.

Edison Details Storage, Transparency Efforts at SONGS Seminar | Eye on SC | picketfencemedia.com

TOP STORY
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Edison Details Storage, Transparency Efforts at SONGS Seminar

- By Angélica Escobar
- 10 hrs ago



The San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS), photographed this past September by San Clemente Times during a tour, as phased decommissioning continues. Photo: Angelica Escobar

Southern California Edison hosted a Community Engagement Panel seminar on Oct. 16 at the Casino San Clemente to update residents on the storage of spent nuclear fuel at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) and the company's ongoing effort to move the material off-site. The public meeting included detailed technical presentations, an independent expert review and a period for public comment that touched on safety, transparency and funding.

Edison Vice President of Generation and Chief Nuclear Officer Fred Bailly told attendees that all spent-fuel canisters inspected at the plant were found to be in good condition and that none required repair.

“Safety is my top priority,” he said. “All spent fuel canisters that have been inspected at SONGS have been found to be in good condition. None requires repair,” adding that the company’s goal is to have all canisters ready for transport “once a storage or disposal facility is available.”

Engineering Manager Jerry Stephenson said the plant uses two dry-storage systems — Holtec UMAX vaults and NUHOMS horizontal modules — to house used nuclear fuel in 316L stainless steel canisters with five-eighths-inch walls. Twelve canisters have been inspected so far, he said, and the deepest surface mark found measured roughly 0.016 inches, well below the one-sixteenth-inch threshold that would trigger evaluation and possible repair. All surface marks, he explained, were from manufacturing or handling and not corrosion.

“All the canisters are in good condition, and nothing requires repair or mitigation,” Stephenson said. Edison has also installed new vent covers to prevent rain from entering the vaults.

Stephenson described a qualified cold-spray metallic overlay repair technique that has already been tested and remains “ready to go” if ever needed. He also said the company is seeking approval from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for a design modification that would help maintain optimal canister temperatures over time.

Dr. James Burns, an engineering and material science professor at the University of Virginia, joined remotely to review the potential for chloride-induced stress corrosion cracking, a long-term concern for metal in marine environments. Burns said the necessary combination of salt, humidity and stress has not formed at San Onofre and is unlikely to do so for decades.

“Inspection indications of weld regions are really the only ones that are going to be relevant,” he said. “Under the current inspection and management program, these canisters can be relied on indefinitely.”

During the public-comment portion, one caller urged immediate relocation of the waste, citing sea-level rise and climate threats, and said that waiting until 2040 “will be too late.”

Longtime advocate Gary Headrick praised Edison for releasing 1,749 canister inspection photos online, calling the move “a genuine step forward” that shows “what trust looks like.” Other speakers asked the company to enable chat functions during online meetings to help participants report technical issues and questioned how ratepayer funds were being used to support the Spent Fuel Solutions coalition.

Public watchdogs had requested clarification on the coalition’s funding after a recent presentation to the Irvine City Council. Edison’s Manuel Camargo said about $896,000 from Edison and $235,000 from San Diego Gas & Electric — roughly $1.13 million total — had been spent since 2021, using decommissioning trust funds that are subject to oversight by the California Public Utilities Commission.

Steve Sharma, a physicist who has degrees from USC and UC Berkeley, also suggested converting the San Onofre site into a national laboratory for nuclear-fusion research, arguing that California should lead in the development of emerging clean-energy technologies.

During a written Q&A segment, attendees asked about inspection frequency, weld documentation and accident scenarios. Stephenson said Edison inspects one new and one previously inspected canister every five years, focusing on the oldest and coldest units. He emphasized that a through-wall crack is “not considered a credible accident” under current safety design and that canisters are regularly monitored to detect any early signs of corrosion.

Dr. Burns was also asked how long the canisters could safely remain on-site without intervention.

"If they can be continued to operate in that paradigm, indefinitely," he replied. "It is being prudently handled by the aging management program to where you're going to find any issue before you have a problem."

Toward the end of the meeting, Edison staff read a correction to a previously published typo regarding a radiation dose percentage from a March 2025 report and said the corrected figure would be posted online.

In closing, Bailly reaffirmed that while the waste is being stored safely, the company's long-term objective remains unchanged.

"It was never meant to stay here," he said. "It's the federal government's responsibility to take possession."

CEP Chair Dan Stetson thanked participants and summarized the key takeaways: increased transparency, safe current storage, a proven repair method and continued advocacy for a federal solution. The next Community Engagement Panel meeting is scheduled for Nov. 13 and will be held online.

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https://www.ocregister.com/2025/10/29/when-50-billion-cant-buy-much-of-anything/

NEWS

Opinion Columnist

When $50 billion can't buy much of anything

Column: The Nuclear Waste Fund – which we all paid into – keeps growing. But so do costs, even as America creeps very slowly toward any waste solution.



(iStockphoto)



By **TERI SFORZA** | tsforza@scng.com | Orange County Register
PUBLISHED: October 29, 2025 at 7:30 AM PDT | UPDATED: October 29, 2025 at 8:12 AM PDT

Californians paid nearly $1 billion for the permanent disposal of waste from San Onofre, Diablo Canyon, et al.
Our sister states with nuclear plants forked over about $20.2 billion for same.

Yet nearly a half century after those initial payments were made, America's commercial nuclear waste remains exactly where it started, even as the U.S. Nuclear Waste Fund fund's original $21.2 billion has grown to an astonishing $60.1 billion, according to figures from the the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

Minus what the department spent (squandered?) on the moribund Yucca Mountain project and related efforts over the years — about $11.5 billion — we have a current balance of some $49.5 billion in the NWF, just sitting around, waiting to spring to action.

That's an awful lot of money. But it can't do much of anything because, under current law, NWF dollars can buy a repository at Yucca. Period. And Nevada — which never had a commercial nuclear plant — will assure you that Yucca is never going to happen!

So that leaves a question: How can we make meaningful progress relocating this highly radioactive stuff that's currently in our coastlines, and in earthquake zones, and near millions and millions of people?

Do this!

Rod Baltzer, chief executive of Deep Isolation (a company that hopes to commercialize nuclear waste disposal) and chair of the U.S. Nuclear Industry Council's Back-End Working Group, gave the following to-do list to the Spent Fuel Solutions coalition last week:

– Congress must amend the Nuclear Waste Policy Act to drop Yucca-and-Yucca only, and allow nuclear waste dollars to pursue other disposal efforts.

– While Congress is at it, the Act should be amended to allow for temporary storage — not currently allowed — while permanent storage is being pursued. The two should go hand-in-hand, or communities mulling temporary storage may not believe the mission is truly temporary.

Nuclear Waste Fund (NWF)
Annual Financial Report Summary
FY2024 and Cumulative
($'s in millions)

	1983 - FY2024	FY2024
Fee and Interest Billings to Commercial Nuclear Generators	24,472	141
Less: Receivable as of September 30, 2024	(2,691)	(141)
Receipts from Commercial Nuclear Generators	21,781	-
Interest Income, Gains, and Other Revenues	35,402	1,811
Receipts from Defense Nuclear Generators	3,768	0
Receipts from Nuclear Waste Disposal Appropriation Not Derived From the NWF	28	5
Total Income	**$ 60,979**	**$ 1,816**
Expenditures for First Repository Costs (Yucca Mountain and Other First Repository Activities)	7,528	0
Expenditures for Other Waste Program Activities[1]	3,855	19
Expenditures for Second Repository Costs	109	-
Total Expenditures	**$ 11,491**	**$ 19**
Unexpended or Undisbursed Defense Nuclear Waste Disposal Appropriations (DNWDA)	2	(0)
Unexpended or Undisbursed Nuclear Waste Disposal Appropriation Not Derived From the NWF[2]	14	(4)
Current Balance in the Nuclear Waste Fund (Fund Balance with Treasury and Investments and Related Interest, Net) and Unexpended/Undisbursed Appropriations	**$ 49,503**	**$ 1,793**

(Numbers may not add due to rounding)

[1] For FY2024, the Expenditures for Other Waste Program Activities included $13.4 million derived from the NWF ($9.4 million for program support and $4.1 million for the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board) and $5.3 million derived from the Treasury's General Fund for interim storage. (Numbers may not add due to rounding)

[2] The -$4 million (rounded) results from the $5.3 million of interim storage expenditures in FY2024 minus $0.9 million costs incurred but not paid in FY2024.

-Responsibility for getting the job done should be stripped from the Department of Energy and handed to a new, independent agency that exists for this and this

only. This new agency should get access to NWF dollars and not have to depend on political whims for its funding, as is the case now.
-Officials should educate and incentivize communities that are interested in hosting the waste (something they're currently working on).
-We should embrace technological innovation, start building, launch pilot projects, consider reprocessing spent fuel, demonstrate transport casks for waste to the public.
-We should also allow for a broad regulatory framework that embraces many different solutions, not just one.

The current administration wants to accelerate the licensing of advanced reactors and put America back on the nuclear map. Figuring out where to put the waste will be integral to any dreams of a nuclear renaissance in America. "It's really beneficial if you spend a little time up front thinking about the back end," Baltzer said.

If the government can show progress on spent waste disposal, it might be allowed to resume collecting money for the NWF.

Billions wasted

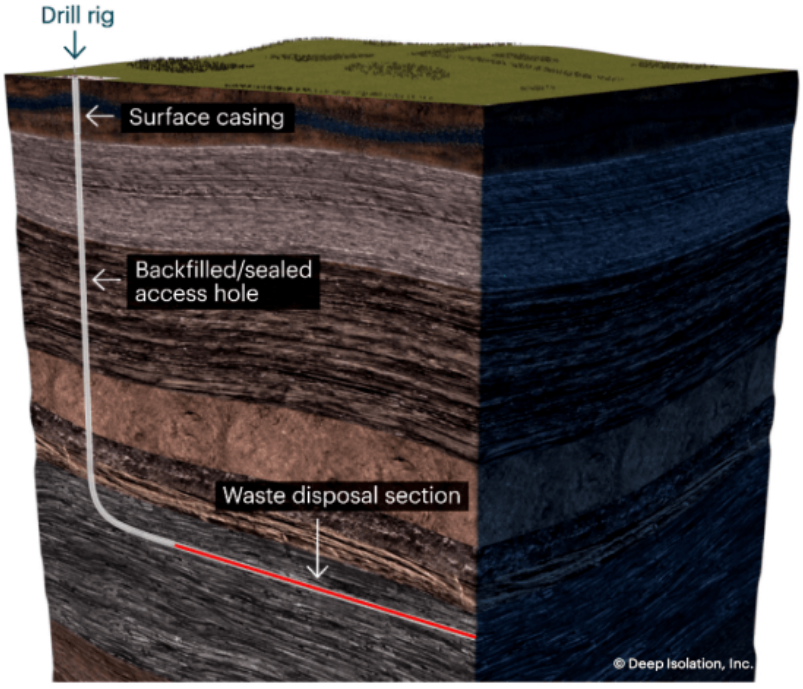
It's important to understand that the U.S. government, in its attempts to goose the growth of nuclear power more than 40 years ago, signed contracts with utilities promising to start accepting commercial nuclear waste for permanent disposal by, er, 1998.



With the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station as a backdrop Huy Pham of San Juan Capistrano walks south along the beach at San Onofre State Beach. Mark Rightmire, ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

To fund disposal, a charge was built into electric rates — initially, $0.001 for every kilowatt hour provided by a nuclear power plant. But as years went by — and when money piled up in the NWF without the development of a repository — the fee wound up in court. Utilities were stuck with the headache and expense of storing waste themselves, so in 2014, a judge forbade the federal government from continuing to collect the NWF fees. How in good conscience could it charge for a service that it wasn't providing, and wouldn't provide for many, many decades?

This paralysis on waste has put taxpayers on the hook for billions — even those who never got a kilowatt of power from nuclear. The government breached its contract with the utilities and must pay them for the unexpected cost of temporary storage, the court has ruled — but not from the NWF. Instead, taxpayers pony up — some $11 billion thus far, with some $40 billion gone before it's all over, a recent audit said.



DEEP HORIZONTAL BOREHOLE REPOSITORY FOR NUCLEAR WASTE

(Courtesy Deep Isolation)

That's about $2 million per day. Here at San Onofre, the feds have reimbursed Edison nearly $400 million for babysitting waste between 1998 and 2016, Edison recently told us.

"We have 92,500 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel stored at 70 sites in 35 states, and no permanent disposal," Baltzer said. "Taxpayers are getting the brunt of this."

Baltzer's Deep Isolation specializes in deep borehole technology, a method long seen as a viable way to permanently ditch nuclear waste. The Spent Fuel Solutions coalition — a collection of local governments, elected officials, environmental groups, businesses and regular folks — seeks to get these ideas in front of decision-makers. Funded with some $900,000 from Edison, $235,000 from San Diego Gas & Electric, and $100,000 each from the counties of Orange and San Diego, the coalition seeks to make things happen.
"It's time," Baltzer said.

"Stop kicking can down the road and handing this off to our grandkids."
Best Regards,

Lorraine Sandstrom
Community Affairs and Relations, Senior Specialist
Community Engagement Panel (CEP) Management and Stakeholder Engagement (DA Complex B)
Southern California Edison, San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS)

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3. For Awareness: Recent News Articles re: SONGS Dismantlement, Spent Nuclear Fuel Storage and the Irvine City Council Study Session

From: Lorraine Quinn Sandstrom
Sent: Thursday, October 2, 2025 10:25 AM
To: Daniel T. Stetson; VictorCabral; Victor Cabral; Martha McNicholas; Michelle Anderson; Mike Balsamo; Garry Brown; Jim Desmond; Katrina Foley; Rob Howard; Dan Whitley; Scott Kibbey; Val Macedo; Marni Magda; Lisa Davis; Ted Quinn; John Taylor; Mel Vernon; Michael Villar; Kelvin Barrios; Alyssa Napuri; Mark Enmeier; Hunter McDonald; John Gabbard; Mike Sappingfield; Ken Schultz
Cc: Manuel Camargo
Subject: For Awareness: Recent News Articles re: SONGS Dismantlement, Spent Nuclear Fuel Storage and the Irvine City Council Study Session

Dear CEP Members and Alternates,

I write to share some recent articles related to SONGS and the September 30 Irvine City Council Study Session.

Teri Sforza, OC Register, writes about Irvine City Council Study Session covering all topics and commentary from the meeting, and quoting several people including Fred and Manuel.
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Teri Sforza, OC Register, writes about Irvine City Council Study Session covering all topics and commentary from the meeting, and quoting several people including Fred and Manuel.

Solid ideas and misinformation compete at Irvine's nuclear waste session – Orange County Register

Solid ideas, some untruths compete at Irvine's nuclear waste meeting

Doomsday scenario: Terrorists commandeer a 747 and crash it into San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station's dry waste storage pad.

Are we all going to die?

Well, yes, someday. But probably not from this.

Before we address the outright nonsense we heard, let us extend kudos to the good city of Irvine for its "high-stakes Study Session addressing public health and safety" on Tuesday. During this meeting, it was insisted that we create a "Plan B" for the 3.6 million pounds of highly radioactive nuclear waste that's currently stranded on a scenic bluff over the blue Pacific, in an earthquake zone, close to 8 million people.

Irvine Mayor Larry Agran — and, frankly, many others, including yours truly — have little faith in the federal government's ability to find a permanent home for commercial nuclear waste. The feds vowed to start taking possession of it back in, er, 1982, with the first pickups to begin in 1998. Alas, as of 2025, the feds haven't accepted a single ounce of commercial waste for permanent disposal, even after collecting more than $40 billion from ratepayers for that purpose and spending more than $11 billion on moribund Yucca Mountain.
Agran, who has a talent for stirring the pot, proposes a simple (if expensive) alternative to San O's current "beachfront nuclear waste dump:" Move it to higher ground on Camp Pendleton, on the east side of Interstate 5, away from king tides and tsunami threats (no matter how remote those threats may actually be).

"The top priority of government at any level is to keep people safe," Agran said, calling on other cities to join his in advocating for Plan B.

Important: The Navy has already nixed this idea. But the current administration is hellbent on a nuclear renaissance, so maybe the Navy will change its mind?

Anyway, about two dozen governments, and nearly as many businesses and nonprofits, have already formed the Spent Fuel Solutions Coalition as a way to goose the government to action. Irvine is a member. And while that group is politely working the system — U.S. Rep. Mike Levin, D-San Juan Capistrano, has helped secure funding to pursue

collaboration with communities that want to host permanent disposal sites — Agran is saying something like, "We can't wait for the feds to save us; we have to save ourselves!" The former chair of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission would agree.

"One of the biggest policy mistakes was when the federal government assumed responsibility for the ultimate disposal of commercial nuclear fuel," said Gregory Jaczko. "That has led to what we have today. Unwillingness for anyone to move forward and take responsibility.

"Additional efforts at the local level can help move forward on a solution."

And the bluff at San Onofre, he added, "is not and never will be appropriate for the permanent disposal of spent nuclear fuel."

But while blame and vitriol are (rightfully) heaped on the federal government for its paralysis, "no nuclear spent fuel owner lacks the ability to act independently," Jaczko said. "Why not turn the question around and say, 'How can we move spent fuel sooner? Is there value in starting to formulate a plan to address that problem?' "

Jaczko thinks there is. Agran, and other councilmembers, agree.

Risk?
Kudos, again, to Irvine for letting independent experts explore the realistic risks posed by the accidental release of radiation from spent nuclear fuel.

If a fraction of 1% of what's at San Onofre was released, it would create a relatively large problem, said David B. Richardson, professor of environmental and occupational health (and associate dean of research) at UCI.

"But here's the paradox — it would almost be imperceptible to an individual person," he said. "Small risk over a large population can have really substantial impacts."

Currently, about 1 in 6 of us will eventually die of cancer, Richardson said. Radiation exposure could change that to 1 in 5.5. And radiation's effects are magnified in children (who are still growing). "We can't say 'there's no impact.' And, all things being equal, we'd like to avoid it," he said.

Risks can be reduced by early intervention and harm can be mitigated with planning, he said.

Southern California Edison, which runs San O, said (for the umpteenth time) that the waste is — and will remain — safely managed. Canisters of radioactive pellets are encased in NRC-licensed steel-and-concrete structures several feet thick. Some of it has been there more than 20 years, and one of the two dry storage systems has already been relicensed.

Aging management programs aim to keep an eye on the most likely issues — stress corrosion cracks in the canisters — and robots have been developed to spot corrosion and repair it before cracks can develop.

Nuclear experts have likened this to more of a safety strobe light than a safety spotlight, as only a small sample of canisters get inspected. But that could change as the systems age.

There's no credible scenario that could result in a radiation release beyond the site, said Frederic Bailly, Edison's vice president of generation and chief nuclear officer. That's not just Edison's conclusion; it's the NRC's as well, he said.

Still, Edison says it's engaged.

"We are not satisfied with the status quo," said Manuel C. Camargo Jr., Edison's principal manager of decommissioning. "That's why we are highly motivated to get the spent fuel off site and restore the land to the Navy."

Other countries, including Finland, Sweden, Canada and France, have been more successful at finding homes for nuclear waste by collaborating with willing communities, he said. We've known exactly what to do with nuclear waste for years — bury it forever in deep geologic repositories, as we currently do with the government's atomic bomb waste at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico.

"Salt formations at WIPP were deposited in thick beds during the evaporation of an ancient ocean," the site explains. "These geologic formations consist mainly of sodium chloride rock, the same substance that, in granular form, is in a salt shaker. The primary salt formation containing the WIPP repository is about 2,000 feet thick, beginning 850 feet below the surface.

"Formed about 250 million years ago during the Permian Era (before dinosaurs), large expanses of uninterrupted salt beds provide a setting free from the disturbances of large earthquakes. Proven stability over such a long time span ensures that a repository within the salt formation will remain stable for the time it will take for WIPP-bound waste to lose most of its radioactivity.

Right now, though, the Nuclear Waste Policy Act requires that commercial waste be retrievable. The law would have to change to bury it for good and forever. Let's do that.

'China Syndrome' and other nonsense

While Irvine took a sober tack in its background spiel about the meeting — "Spent nuclear fuel at San Onofre threatens public health and safety in Orange County, San Diego County, and beyond. With 123 aging canisters situated just 100 feet from the shoreline, experts warn of growing risk from corrosion, environmental disasters, and potential contamination events" — public comments descended into the malarky.

A councilman evoked the fictional meltdown in “The China Syndrome” from the dais. Please, people. Analogies to Chernobyl, Fukushima and Three Mile Island are just plain ridiculous. Those plants were actively splitting atoms. They suffered catastrophic accidents leading to severe overheating of their reactor cores, which melted fuel. Such a scenario is impossible at San Onofre, which hasn’t split atoms since 2012. Its reactors are in pieces, its fuel has been cooling for at least a decade, and is in passive dry storage. There’s just no analogous scenario and it’s alarmist to suggest otherwise.

Terrorism? Sabotage? Canister failure? Experts have explored San Onofre doomsday scenarios and warned that “unhelpful dread and anxiety” can lead to bad decision-making. To simulate the impact of a high-speed 747 aircraft on dry storage systems, steel slugs weighing 110 pounds were fired from a 155-mm cannon at simulated waste overpacks. The slugs penetrated several feet into the overpacks, but didn’t completely penetrate the canisters that might result in a big release of radioactive material. “Jet fuel fires from aircraft attacks would likely be dispersed and of short duration,” an expert said at the 2020 doomsday meeting. In a different simulation, a shaped-charge anti-tank weapon (an explosive device designed to focus blast energy) was fired at a cast-iron cask containing nuclear waste. The bare cask was breached, but the cask within a concrete jacket, or overpack, was not breached. Material could be released from a bare cask, but precisely how much would depend on the number of damaged fuel elements and other factors. “No dry storage system provides complete protection, but any radioactive material releases from attacks would be relatively small,” an expert said.

If someone dropped a bomb powerful enough to destroy the dry storage systems, we’d have a much bigger problem than spent nuclear fuel, experts have said.

Speakers asserted that the waste canisters cannot be moved. That’s not true. They were moved once already — from the spent fuel pools to the dry storage system — and they’re designed to be popped into an overpack for eventual transportation to … well, wherever, once we figure that out. Radioactive waste has been moving for years. There’s even a rail car designed just for that.

Complaints about “thin-walled” canisters have been raised for more than a decade. The canisters are not sitting out on shelves like wine bottles; they’re encased in several feet of steel and concrete.

A paddle-out to protest against the waste is slated for Oct. 11 from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM at San Clemente State Beach, south of the pier. The waste, its storage and an initiative to relocate it offsite will be discussed at San Onofre’s volunteer Community Engagement Panel meeting from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Oct. 16. It will be held at The Casino, 140 Avenida Pico, San Clemente, and streamed via Microsoft Teams. See http://bit.ly/3IEj1Yi for details. Edison is expected to present more photos of canister inspections, which activists have been demanding.

Let's all agree that we have to get the waste the heck out of here as soon as possible. Irvine will revisit the issue in a couple of months, perhaps pushing forward a study on what it would take to relocate San Onofre's waste to higher ground on Camp Pendleton. That might be better than where it is. But the stuff should leave SoCal, and its 8 million people, as soon as humanly possible.
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https://enewspaper.ocregister.com/infinity/article_popover_share.aspx?guid=b87c2438-00a2-4aa9-b7cf-17fed7e72961&share=true

IRVINE

Officials confront nuclear waste issues

City Council studying how San Onofre waste may impact region



Irvine City Council members listen to public comments at a special meeting to discuss public safety regarding spent nuclear fuel stored at the closed San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station on Tuesday. Leonard Ortiz — staff photographer

By Hanna Kang
hkang@scng.com

Irvine officials gathered Tuesday to confront a concern that has lingered on the county's doorstep for more than a decade: What to do with the 3.6 million pounds of radioactive waste stored at the shuttered San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station?

Mayor Larry Agran convened a special City Council study session on Tuesday to examine how the decades-old waste — sealed in 123 stainless-steel canisters just 30 miles from

the city's borders — could affect Irvine and the rest of Orange County. He called on his city colleagues to consider a local "Plan B" to protect the region, including a study on whether Irvine could play a role in such an effort.

Any release of radioactive material, Agran warned, could impact millions of residents and thousands of businesses across Orange, San Diego and nearby counties.

"The spent nuclear fuel currently stored at San Onofre has regional implications for millions of Southern Californians, particularly residents of Orange County and San Diego County," Agran wrote in a Sept. 15 memo announcing the meeting.

San Onofre, on the northern edge of Camp Pendleton, sits about 25 miles from Irvine and within 50 miles of nearly 8 million people, Agran said. The U.S. Department of Energy was tasked with creating a permanent repository for nuclear waste decades ago, but one has yet to be built. Current federal efforts, led by Rep. Mike Levin, D-San Juan Capistrano, propose consolidated interim storage sites in Texas or New Mexico, though Agran noted that the last of the fuel might not be moved until 2060.

"We need a local plan that once implemented, would safeguard us in Southern California for 100 years or more, even if no federal repository is forthcoming," he said.

He suggested moving the canisters to higher ground on the inland side of Interstate 5 at Camp Pendleton. The fortified site, he said, would be better equipped to withstand floods, earthquakes, tsunamis or even potential terrorist attacks.

But "Plan B" is not intended to replace the long-promised federal nuclear waste repository. Rather, it would be a local measure prepared in anticipation of a national plan, which could take decades to implement, Agran noted.

"The facility would be designed to incorporate all manner of monitoring and maintenance to ensure the readiness of all stored nuclear waste for safe transport, if and when a national repository is finally approved, filled and operational," he said.

No immediate decisions came out of Irvine's Tuesday meeting, but the council is expected to revisit the matter at a regular meeting in November or December.

Gregory Jaczko, former chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, argued the waste cannot remain permanently at San Onofre.

"The site is not and never will be appropriate for permanent disposal," he said, adding that the California Coastal Commission has only permitted the current site until 2035.

Jaczko pointed to Irvine's history of environmental leadership, noting the 1989 City Council ordinance that banned chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in many industrial processes

and consumer products. He said the city "can serve a similar role today by developing a concrete plan for removing the spent fuel from San Onofre."

David Richardson, a professor of environmental and occupational health at UC Irvine, warned of the potential health risks if even a fraction of the material were released. He said an accidental release could double the leukemia risk for young children in Orange County.

But Southern California Edison, which operates the site, insisted the current storage system is secure.

"Safety is my No. 1 priority," Frederic Bailly, the utility's vice president of generation and chief nuclear officer, told city leaders and community members at Tuesday's study session.

He said the containers exceed federal guidelines and are designed to resist corrosion in the marine environment.

"There is no credible scenario that could result in the release of radiological material beyond the site," Bailly said. Pressed by Agran on whether that assessment would still hold decades from now, Bailly said it would.

Residents and activists who packed the council chambers in the early afternoon urged the city to push for action rather than waiting on the federal government. One speaker, who said she had lived near Japan's Fukushima, urged relocation to higher ground from a site "vulnerable to corrosion."

Others warned of environmental threats, stressing that "this is an Orange County and San Diego County problem" that requires local leadership.

"Irvine's involvement on nuclear waste strengthens the broader push by local governments to get this waste out of our region," Levin said. "Removing it will take cooperation at every level — federal, state, and local — and I'll keep fighting in Congress for the federal resources needed to make it happen."

>>>

Angelica Escobar's piece ran in the San Clemente Times today as well. She toured the SONGs plant last week.

Inside the Demolition and Dry-Storage Work at SONGS | San Clemente Times | picketfencemedia.com

Inside the Demolition and Dry-Storage Work at SONGS



The San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS), photographed earlier this month by San Clemente Times during a tour, as phased decommissioning continues. Photo: Angelica Escobar

Standing at a temporary office building right next to the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS), Southern California Edison's Ron Pontes points to an aerial photo taken when Units 2 and 3 still operated.

"This shows the entire site, the licensed area for the site," said Pontes, SCE'S Manager, SONGS Site Closure and Environmental Oversight. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission–licensed footprint, he explains, stretches from the Pacific Ocean on the west to the old Pacific Coast Highway on the east.

"What remains after this phase of decommissioning that's above grade will be the switch yard, (the) dry storage facility, and the sea wall riprap and walkway that protects the site from the ocean," he added.

The work now underway focuses on the former "power block" for Units 2 and 3 — turbine buildings, reactor containment domes and the common structures between them.

"The objective of this phase of decommissioning is to remove all of the above-grade structures that are here to three feet below grade, decontaminate the substructures that remain … the basements," Pontes said. "And then we're going to fill those basements back in and bring the grade back up to where it is today." After that, he added that SCE will "wait a long time … probably until this fuel is gone or is being removed" before determining any further removals with the U.S. Navy, which owns the land.

Unit 1 — built in the 1960s, operated until 1992 and partially decommissioned in the early 2000s — now hosts one of SONGS' two Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installations (ISFSIs), or dry-storage facilities. The site, dry storage facility and Units 2 and 3, Pontes notes, is compact. "We're 84 acres in the licensed area," he said, calling SONGS "one of the smallest footprints in the country for a nuclear power plant."

Two storage systems sit side-by-side on the coast. The older Transnuclear/Orano system stores canisters horizontally in concrete vaults — "50 canisters … with 24 fuel assemblies in each canister, plus 13 canisters of a material called greater-than-Class-C material," Pontes said. Adjacent is the newer Holtec UMAX system, a largely below-grade concrete monolith that holds canisters vertically. "On the Holtec system, we have 73 canisters with 37 fuel assemblies each," he said. Some fuel from decades past was shipped to a GE pool in Morris, Illinois; since national reprocessing never materialized, the rest remains at SONGS in dry storage pending the identification of a federal repository where it could be moved.

Radiation Protection Manager Jeff Carey — who led the plant's radiation protection department — offered a primer before the walk-down. He described how all nuclear plants apply ALARA, "as low as reasonably achievable," managing "time, distance and shielding" to protect workers and the public. Using a Geiger-Mueller counter, he demonstrated detection of radioactive contamination and explained personal and area monitoring.

Typical decommissioning workers, he said, "receive … around 100 millirem" in a year, well below federal limits. Pontes reinforced the point: "The federal limits are 5,000 millirem per year … (but) we control that dose … to much lower level, typically less than 1,000 millirem per year, and the actual dose that our workers pick up, typically, nominally, may be less than 100 millirem in a year."

At the UMAX pad, a California State Lands Commission-required real-time monitor read roughly a dozen microrem per hour — only marginally above background. "As a member of the public, under EPA regulations (you) are limited to 25 millirem per year for radiation that comes off of this plant," Pontes said. Based on extensive monitoring and conservative calculations, "a member of the public gets less than one millirem per year … from our operations here."

Both dry-storage systems rely on passive cooling: cool air enters low, warms as it flows past the canisters and rises out of upper vents — no pumps or power required. Canister temperatures, Pontes said, sit around 250 degrees Fahrenheit, and the thick concrete surrounding them provides robust shielding. To renew the Transnuclear system's NRC license, SCE developed a robot to crawl through vents and inspect canister surfaces.

"The canisters look pretty much the same, exactly the same as when we installed them … so they haven't had any degradation at all," Pontes said, adding that SCE specified an extra one-eighth-inch of steel in SONGS canisters compared with typical industry thickness.

Canister 72

During the tour and technical briefing provided to *SC Times*, SONGS staff did not present any new canister-specific information about Canister 72 beyond what had already been shared at the Aug. 28 Community Engagement Panel meeting. Officials described the overall inspection and maintenance regimen that applies to all SONGS dry-storage canisters, including:

• Periodic visual examinations using high-resolution cameras/robotics to characterize any surface marks or scratches;

• A five-year reinspection cadence for selected reference canisters; and

• Additional design margin at SONGS (SCE specified an extra one-eighth-inch of steel in canister walls compared with typical industry thickness).

SCE reported that canisters previously inspected under this program showed no degradation affecting integrity and that radiation dose rates measured around the pads remain low and near background at public-access points. If SCE provides canister-specific updates for No. 72, *SC Times* will publish those details in a follow-up.

Beyond the pads, the demolition choreography is constant: long-reach excavators with shears and hammers punch through reinforced concrete, crews separate metal from rubble, and front-end loaders shuttle debris into an enclosure where rail gondolas are loaded.

“We’re anticipating, in round numbers, about 5,000 rail car shipments over the course of the project,” Pontes said, noting material goes by BNSF to Clive, Utah, after surveys show minimal radiation. “The demolition project started in a real way … in 2020, and we think that we’ll be wrapped up with it mostly by 2028.”

Inside the iconic domes, most large components are gone. In Unit 3, only the spherical bottom head of the reactor vessel remained at tour time; Unit 2's vessel is slated to be segmented and removed beginning later this year, with completion targeted around the first quarter of next year.

After interior civil structures are demolished in Unit 3 and then Unit 2, the buildings themselves will come down. The visual landmark will fade in stages. "Sometime in 2027, maybe towards the end of '27, you won't see the domes anymore from the freeway," Pontes said.

When the current phase is done, the graded site will be largely flat and quiet, with stormwater features, the transmission substation, the two ISFSIs and the public coastal walkway — built as a condition when Units 2 and 3 were constructed — remaining. The long-term solution still hinges on a federal repository. In the meantime, Pontes said, "As long as it's on this site, it's ours, and we'll do whatever we can to safely store it."

Best Regards,
Lorraine Sandstrom
Community Affairs and Relations, Senior Specialist
Community Engagement Panel (CEP) Management and Stakeholder Engagement (DA Complex B)
Southern California Edison, San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS)

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4. For Awareness: OC Register Article re: CEP Educational Seminar and Fullerton Observer Article re: City of Irvine Taking Lead to Safer Nuclear Waste Storage at SONGS

From: Lorraine Quinn Sandstrom
Sent: Friday, October 24, 2025 4:39 PM
To: Daniel T. Stetson; VictorCabral; Victor Cabral; Martha McNicholas; Michelle Anderson; Mike Balsamo; Garry Brown; Jim Desmond; Katina Foley; Rob Howard; Dan Whitley; Scott Kibbey; Val Macedo; Marni Magda; Lisa Davis; Ted Quinn; John Taylor; Mel Vernon; Michael Villar; Kelvin Barrios; Alyssa Napuri; Mark Enmeier; Hunter McDonald; John Gabbard; Mike Sappingfield; Ken Schultz
Cc: Manuel Camargo; Liese Mosher
Subject: For Awareness: OC Register Article on CEP Educational Seminar and Fullerton Observer Article on City of Irvine Taking the Lead to Safer Nuclear Waste Storage at San Onofre
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Dear CEP Members and Alternates,

I write to share articles from the OC Register regarding the CEP Educational Seminar on October 16 and an article in the Fullerton Observer regarding Irvine City Mayor Larry Agran taking the lead to safer nuclear waste storage at San Onofre.

Irvine may lead action to safer **nuclear** waste storage at **San Onofre**: Will other cities join in?
Fullerton Observer
SONGS (**San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station** within 50-miles of Fullerton) aerial view by Matt Gush. September. 30, 2025 may mark the day ...

Irvine may lead action to safer nuclear waste storage at San Onofre: Will other cities join in?

BY SARAH MOSKO, PHD ON OCTOBER 22, 2025 • (1 COMMENT)



SONGS (San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station within 50-miles of Fullerton) aerial view by Matt Gush

September. 30, 2025 may mark the day communities in Southern California first took initiative to protect themselves from deadly nuclear waste stranded indefinitely at San Onofre.

With Irvine Mayor Larry Agran spearheading the effort, a Special Study Session of the Irvine City Council convened on Sept. 30 to address the risks of 3.6 million pounds of highly radioactive spent nuclear fuel (SNF) stored in temporary canisters, out in the open, in an earthquake zone, and just 108 feet from the shoreline. The safety threats include terrorism,

sea level rise, earthquakes, tsunamis, and cannister corrosion from exposure to moist, salty air.

Because many of the fission products of nuclear reactors, like Cesium-137, are highly radioactive and extremely long-lived, SNF requires isolation for hundreds of thousands of years. Each of San Onofre's 123 canisters contains about one-third the Cesium-137 as was released during the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster.

The canisters were not designed for long-term storage and lack methodology to monitor in real time for radiation leaks or canister degradation.

The nuclear waste will remain at San Onofre for the foreseeable future because of the federal government's failure to create a permanent geologic repository for the nation's commercial SNF, as mandated by law. In response, some lawmakers are hoping to convince communities in Texas and New Mexico to amass SNF in "consolidated interim storage" (CIS) facilities until a geologic repository materializes. So far, such efforts have been blocked by those states out of fear of becoming de facto permanent waste dumps.

For us living near San Onofre, it is critical to understand that, even if a community somewhere consented to hosting CIS, the earliest one could open would be 2038-2040, according to the Department of Energy. Then, it could take a few more decades for all of San Onofre's SNF to relocate because of competition with other nuclear plants to transfer their waste too.

This means we should be planning for SNF to remain at San Onofre until at least 2060.

Mayor Agran's opening remarks emphasized the responsibility of every level of government – including local jurisdictions – to protect its citizens. He is calling on the City of Irvine to commission the development of a plan to move San Onfre's SNF into a safer storage configuration until the federal government can take possession of it.

Agran's proposal includes relocating the canisters away from the shore, onto higher ground at Camp Pendleton, and into a storage building both fortified to eliminate exposure to the marine environment and insults like earthquakes, tsunamis, and terrorism and equipped to repackage the waste if the canisters fail.

There is urgency to relocate the waste now while the canisters retain enough structural integrity to be moved. Components of the proposal have been informally endorsed by several nuclear safety experts with whom I have consulted privately in working alongside Agran.

Prior Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Dr. Gregory Jaczko, topped the study session's speakers list. His voiced concerns included the renewal of official permits allowing San Onofre's SNF to remain stored, as is, going forward. He supports efforts on the local level to "move forward" to a better interim storage solution.

A presentation followed from Dr. David Richardson, U.C. Irvine Professor of Environmental & Occupational Health. Though he primarily researches cancer risks from radiation exposure, he explained how a radiation release also greatly alters people's relationship to the environment, e.g., property values, use of gardens, and deciding where to live. He has consented to assist in developing a plan for San Onofre.

Dan Stetson, Chairman of the Community Engagement Panel for the decommissioning of the San Onofre plant, described the panel's purpose as providing a venue for the public to engage in what are often "spirited" discussions with Southern California Edison (SCE). He stressed that SCE and the public are both focused on the safe storage of the SNF and its prompt removal. The panel's solution, however, is finding communities to host CIS.

The final presenters were representatives of SCE: Frederic Bailly, the Chief Nuclear Officer, and Manuel Camargo, the Principal Manager of Decommissioning. Bailly explained SCE's view that "the spent fuel storage is safe where it is" and that "there is no credible scenario that could result in the release of radiological material beyond the site." Camargo, however, stressed SCE's energetic support of "getting the spent fuel offsite" and explained that amendments to existing law would be necessary to make way for CIS.

About 150 members of the public filled the council chambers. The 17 commentors from the public were unanimous in voicing concerns about leaving the SNF as is.

The session closed with poignant testimony from Councilmember Mike Carroll who recounted his personal experience in exposing biohazardous government research in New York which resulted in the shutdown of the laboratory. He enumerated many shortcomings he sees in how San Onofre's SNF is currently stored.

A council vote on Mayor Agran's proposal will take place sometime soon. His hope is that, with Irvine taking the lead, other jurisdictions in Orange and San Diego Counties will join in to keep everyone in Southern California safe.

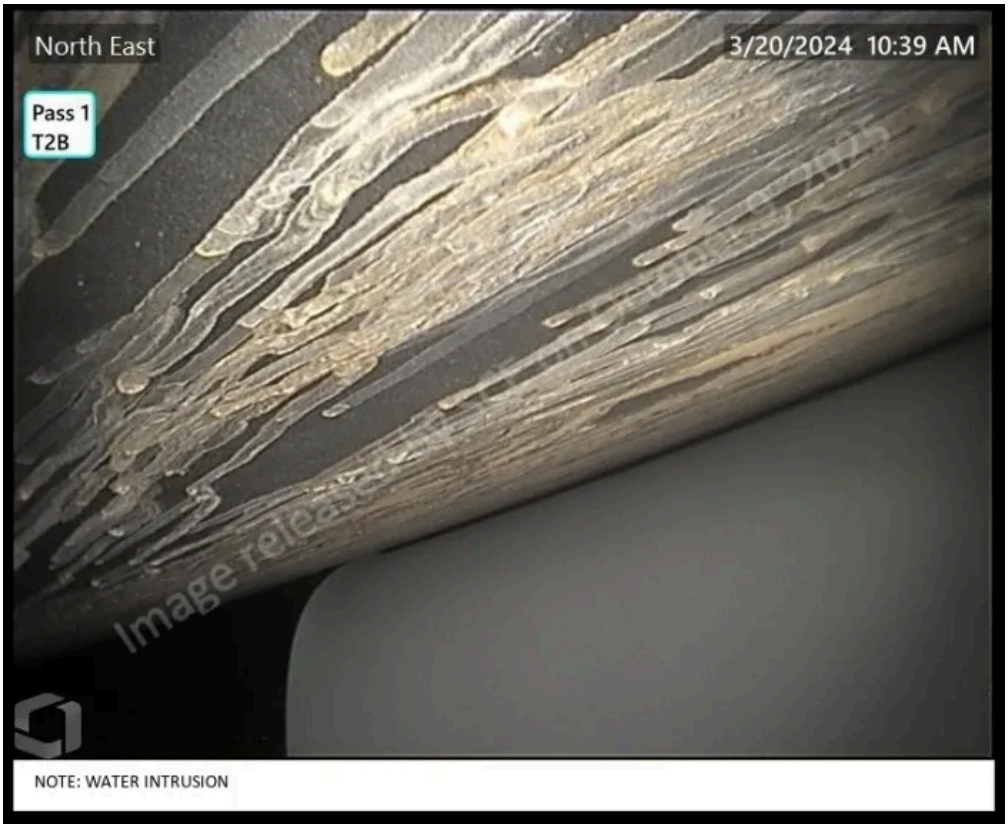
Best Regards,
Lorraine Sandstrom
Community Affairs and Relations, Senior Specialist
Community Engagement Panel (CEP) Management and Stakeholder Engagement (DA Complex B)
Southern California Edison, San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS)

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NEWS

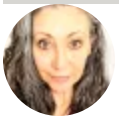
Go ahead, take 1,749 peeks inside the nuclear waste vaults at San Onofre

Column: Edison hints at a new system to heat – not cool! – canisters as they age to prevent stress cracking. 'I'd expect, 100 years from now, it would look exactly the same'



Inspection photo of nuclear waste canister at San Onofre, showing water tracks

(Southern California Edison)



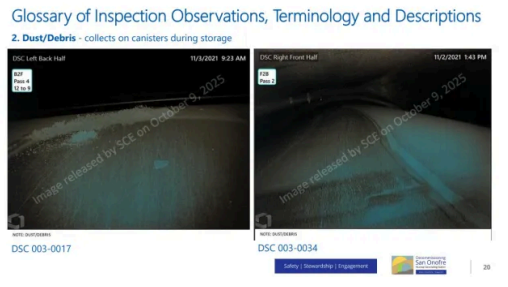
By **TERI SFORZA** | tsforza@scng.com | Orange County Register
UPDATED: October 23, 2025 at 2:29 PM PDT



Now available for your perusal: All 1,749 (once proprietary and not-for-public-consumption) images of San Onofre's nuclear waste canisters, just a mouse click away!

See those long, white, wormy streaks that snake down its surface and suddenly stop? That fuzzy stuff that looks like snow puffs? Those orange splotches on the canister surface? Those scratches?

The wormy streaks, Southern California Edison officials told the Community Engagement panel recently, are the remnants of water that blew into the vaults — before they got their cute umbrella-like rain hats — and dried before it could drip all the way down. (Credit the heat emanating from tons of radioactive waste for that. That heat will dissipate over time, which could cause other issues, but Edison's already working on that, so hang on a minute.)



The snowy fuzz? That's the fine dust, seeds, fibers, etc., that blew in through the air vents and were pushed into a little pile by the inspection robot. The robot acts as a wee snow plow as it climbs around the canister, Edison officials said: The dust is dry and loose, no sign of water, no sprouting seeds.

The orange splotches? Not rust, but evidence of “free iron transfer.” Translated, that means the transfer cask’s epoxy coating wasn’t fully affixed in spots; carbon steel showed through; and iron ions attached themselves to the canister’s surface as it sat in the cooling pool during the drying and welding process. The iron is from somewhere else, not a sign the canister is rusting, officials said, but they’ll keep an eye on it.



And, finally, those scuffs and scratches we’ve glimpsed before? They’re from contact with seismic restraints, and/or radiation shield rings, and/or transfer casks, as canisters journeyed into dry storage. The deepest scratch is no thicker than a couple of sheets of paper, nowhere near a depth that would cause concern or require mediation, officials said.

Comparison photos from 2019 and 2024, of the same spot on Canister 72 (shaped like a sun-flare-gone-awry) were essentially the same, which was a great relief for some of Edison’s harsher critics.



“All the inspected canisters are in good condition. None requires repair,” said Edison’s Fred Bailly, chief nuclear officer. Some folks expect them to be all shiny, pristine and polished, but they’re designed for function, not aesthetics, and are doing their job, he said.

They will continue to be inspected regularly, but the situation is now static, sort of frozen in time, said Jerry Stephenson, Edison’s engineering manager. The canisters won’t be disturbed until it’s time to move them away from the California coast once and for all.



Then Stephenson let slip a little secret.

In development

“I’m going to say something I’ve never said before,” Stephenson said.

Edison realizes that the canisters will eventually cool down so much that wetness won't evaporate quickly, as it does now. So Edison has been working for years with Holtec, maker of San Onofre's "concrete monolith" dry storage system, to control air flow in the vaults to ensure they'll always be warm enough to keep water (and salt!) from condensing on them. That, he said, will make the canisters essentially stress-corrosion-cracking-proof.



The plan is under review at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, he said, and, if approved, Edison would make an announcement in the next year or so.

"I'd expect, 100 years from now, it would look exactly the same, with a little dust," Stephenson said. So long as canister surfaces remain dry so salt and water can't start making trouble, "nothing's going to change."

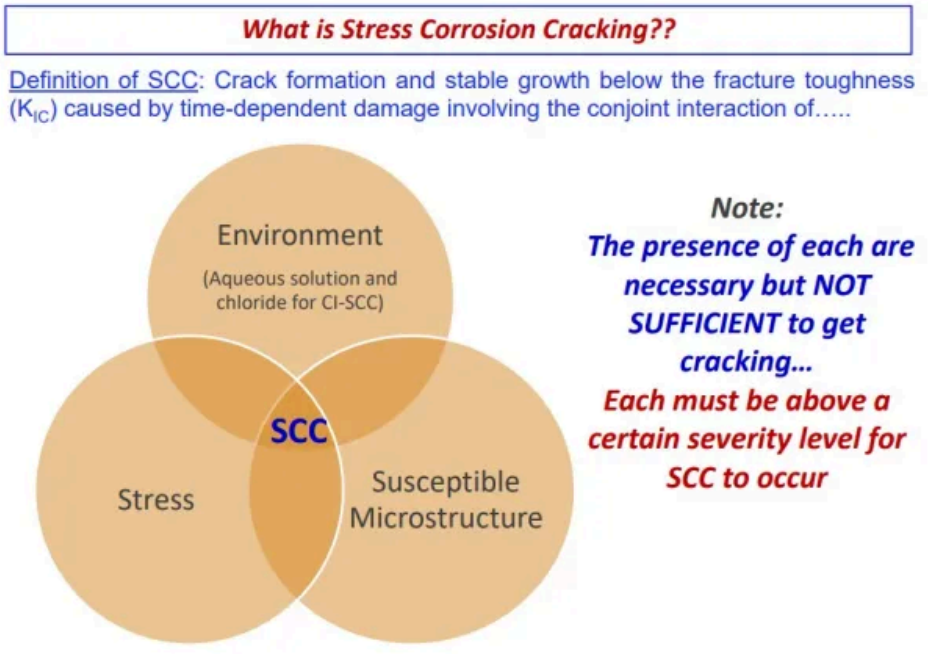
That drew a raised eyebrow from San Diego County Supervisor Jim Desmond.

"I think that's kind of, pie in the sky thinking?" Desmond said almost apologetically. "Nothing lasts forever."

Neutral opinion

As pronouncements from Edison are often met with skepticism, an outside expert was on hand to weigh in on canister degradation.

"I'd disagree that it's pie in the sky to say everything is fine," said James Burns, a materials science and engineering professor at the University of Virginia (who also does consulting). "It's not a foregone conclusion that it has to happen. That there's potential for it to happen doesn't mean it's going to happen."



Burns

This potential, Burns and Edison said, is why the government requires "ageing management" plans, and regular inspections, and the development of tech to repair scratches and defects if they reach a certain threshold. Those thresholds are spelled out in the American Society of Mechanical Engineers code.

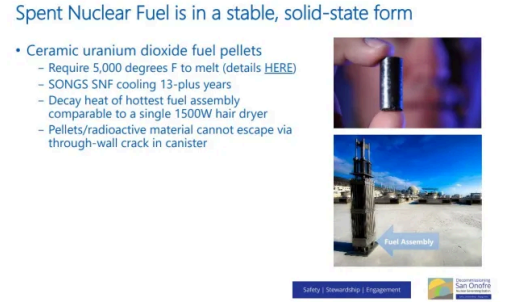


Burns did a pretty thorough presentation about how stress corrosion cracking works — keep an eye on those welds between two pieces of steel — and Edison stressed that such cracks have never been found in the industry to date.

Still, Burns was pressed to say how long nuclear waste canisters would last. Fifty years? One hundred years?

"With the current aging management plan; with the inspections being done and the ability to be responsive?" he said. "Indefinitely."

There's no credible accident scenario that would result in offsite release of radiation, Edison said again. The inspection program would find and repair defects mitigated before reaching a critical state.



"If there's something, we will find it and we will address it," Stephenson said. "We want to make people feel good that these canisters will last a very long time."

"And we are prepared to repair if need be," Bailly said. "We know what to look for."

Inspections have turned up so little change that the NRC may lengthen intervals between them for nuclear plants that are inland, Stephenson said. However, Edison expects the frequency to remain the same here at oceanfront San Onofre. (It peers at two loaded canisters every 5 years, and examines the test canister, which is weighted and heated to mimic a real nuclear waste canister, every 2.5 years.)

Thanks, Edison



Screenshot of Gary Headrick

Long a thorn in Edison's side, Gary Headrick of San Clemente Green has been urging Edison to release all the inspection photos for months.

Initially, Edison said no. They're technically not public documents, officials said. But other utilities have released them, critics responded. Yes, and when technical questions arise at other plants, experts explain and folks move on — but here, expertise is often rejected and misinformation often spreads, officials said.

To the perhaps-less-generous eye, this looked as if Edison was hiding something. So, last month, Edison decided it would, indeed, release the photos and walk folk through what they were seeing (as it's definitely not clear to those of us without specialized knowledge).



Screenshot of Jerry Stephenson

"What a great relief it was to see Canister 72 five years ago and now, and not see a big difference," Headrick told the Community Engagement Panel. "That was a very stressful thing for the public, to not be able to see the photos.

"I want to express my appreciation to Southern California Edison for taking this genuine step forward," he continued. "Your decision to release all photos was meaningful transparency. This is what trust looks like. We are not here to assign blame or prove anyone wrong. We are here to make sure no important assumption is left unchecked. Because when it comes to nuclear waste, the stakes are simply too high. This is about protecting our families, our coastline and future generations."

Screenshot of Fred Bailly

There was talk of Irvine's push for a Plan B — moving the waste to higher ground on Camp Pendleton — and while Bailly stressed that the waste is safely stored, he agreed that no one ever intended to keep them here long-term.

"We share common goal, to find a path to remove these canisters from the site as soon as possible," he said. "Not because they're unsafe; they are stored safely. But because it's the federal government's responsibility to take possession."

It's important to understand, however, that critics' hypothetical, catastrophic musings on the dangers of nuclear waste undermine progress — potentially misinforming and spooking communities that might be willing to host a permanent repository and all of the jobs it would bring.

"Let's stay focused on the facts," Bailly said, "and on working together for responsible and permanent solutions."

Originally Published: October 23, 2025 at 2:19 PM PDT

The Trust Project

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5. For Awareness: OC Register and SC Times Articles re: August 28 CEP Meeting

From: Lorraine Quinn Sandstrom
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 9:07 AM
To: Daniel T. Stetson; VictorCabral; Victor Cabral; Martha McNicholas; Michelle Anderson; Mike Balsamo; Garry Brown; Jim Desmond; Katrina Foley; Rob Howard; Dan Whitley; Scott Kibbey; Val Macedo; Marni Magda; Lisa Davis; Ted Quinn; John Taylor; Mel Vernon; Michael Villar; Kelvin Barrios; Alyssa Napuri; Mark Enmeier; Hunter McDonald; John Gabbard; Mike Sappingfield; Ken Schultz
Cc: Manuel Camargo
Subject: For Awareness: Sharing Orange County Register and San Clemente Times Articles about the August 28, CEP Meeting

Dear CEP Members and Alternates,

For awareness, our August 28, CEP meeting received coverage by the Orange County Register and the San Clemente Times. Links and articles are provided below.

San Onofre could be test site for waste inspection technology – Orange County Register

San Onofre could be test site for waste inspection technology

Column: In just a few years, all that will remain of the nuclear plant will be the waste

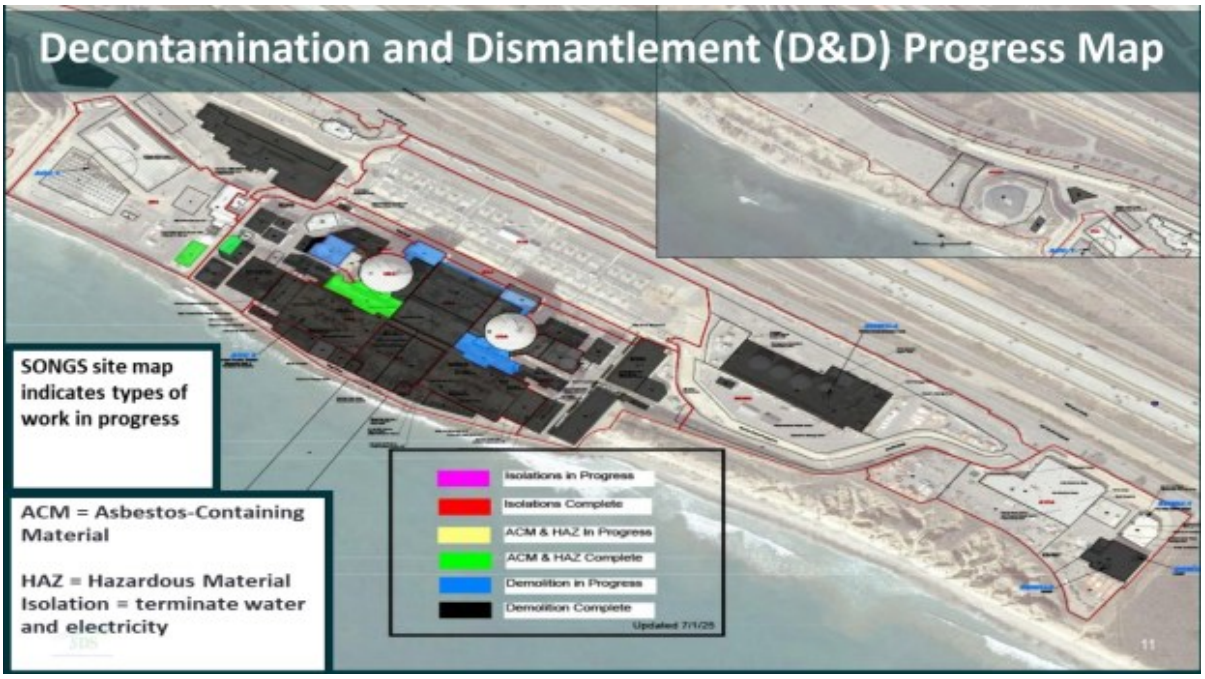


Courtesy Southern California Edison
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By **TERI SFORZA** | tsforza@scng.com | Orange County Register
PUBLISHED: September 5, 2025 at 7:00 AM PDT

Don't let the seemingly-eternal specter of those iconic domes fool you. Most of San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station is — poof! — actually no more. Southern California Edison said the plant is 84% dismantled and will be mostly dust by the end of 2028, save a task or two that might creep into early 2029. Work now focuses on removing large components from inside those iconic domes, as well as shipping debris off site, officials told the volunteer San Onofre Community Engagement Panel last week.



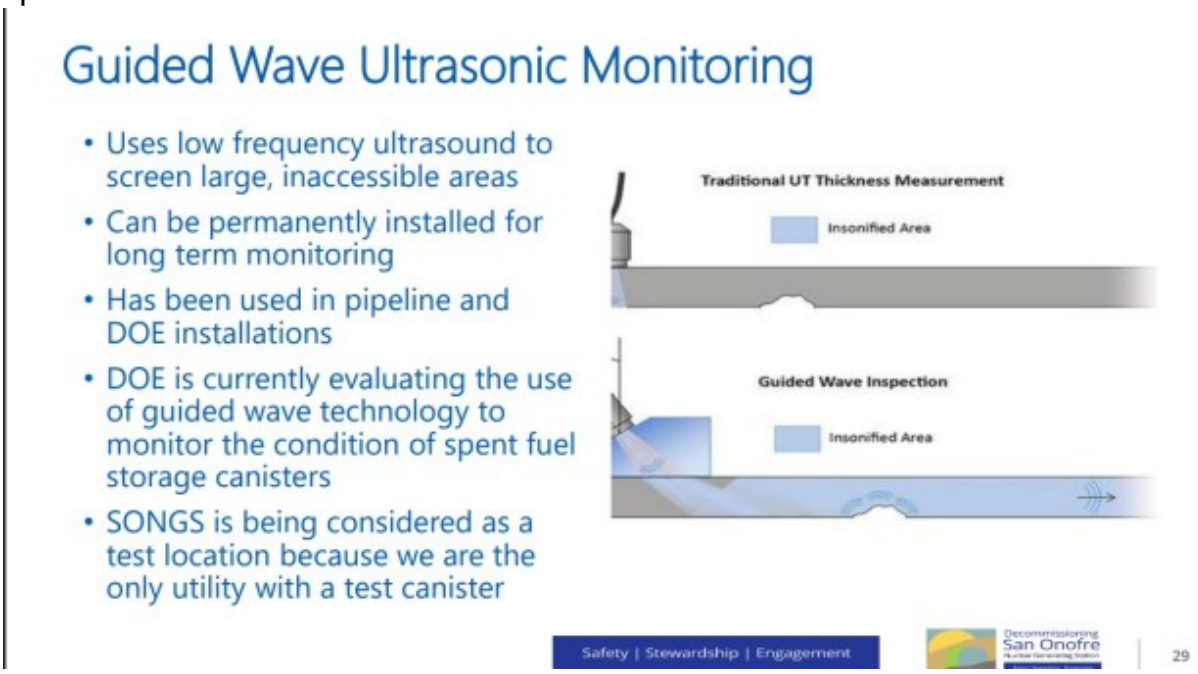
Courtesy Southern California Edison

The domes will start coming down next year.

Of course, San Onofre's nuclear waste will remain on that bluff over the blue Pacific long after most everything else is gone — i.e, until the federal government figures out where to put it. That prospect creates tremendous angst among activists who worry about the degradation of storage canisters over time.

The feds, after all, aren't known for swift action: Radioactive waste was supposed to start exiting nuke plants in, er, 1998.

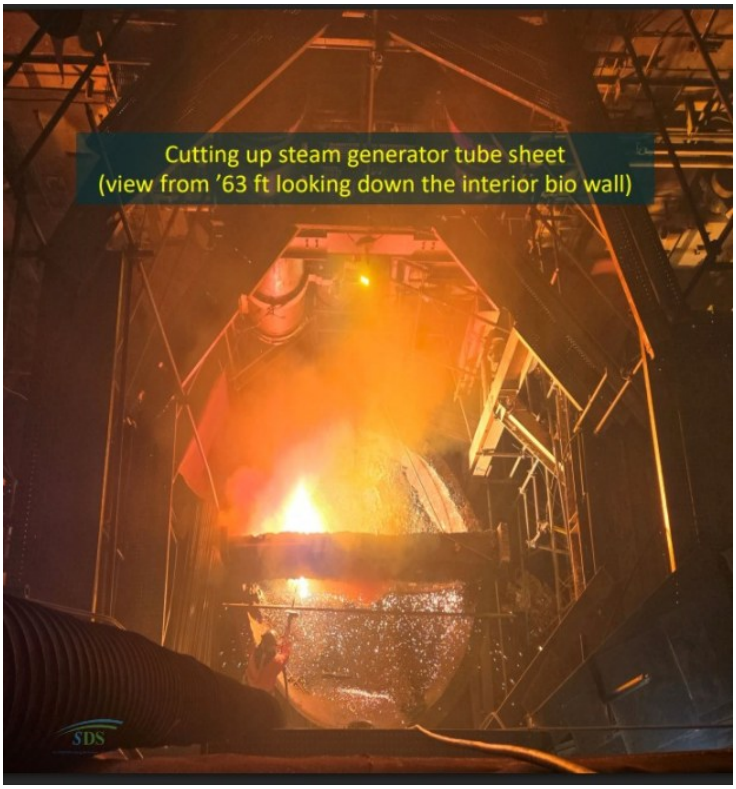
Enter now a fresh technology that the U.S. Department of Energy *might* use at San Onofre. The feds are considering San O for a demonstration project using "guided wave ultrasonic monitoring," Edison said — tech that's currently used to keep an eye on hard-to-access pipelines would also monitor the condition of spent fuel canisters.



Courtesy Southern California Edison

Unlike the monitoring technology that Edison currently uses — including robots that crawl over canisters and measure the depth of scratches, etc. — guided wave technology doesn't return a numerical reading, or a thickness measure, said engineer Michael Bryson. Rather, it would allow Edison to screen large surface areas of the canisters for change, loss, imperfection, defects.

Why is San Onofre is in the running for this tech? Because it's the only utility with a test canister in its dry storage systems, Bryson said. Its test canister does not contain nuclear waste, but is heated to mimic containers that do, allowing for easier inspections of how the canister holds up without the worries of radiation. Final word on the new tech's use locally is expected soon.



Courtesy Southern California Edison

It's unclear if a new inspection tool would do much to ease worried minds, but critics aren't enamored with the inspection systems in place now. Gary Hendrick of San Clemente Green has been calling on Edison to release photos of scratched canisters that were taken by its inspection robots, something Edison hasn't been eager to do. Why? Because when technical questions arise at other plants, experts explain and folks move on. Here, officials say, expertise is often rejected and misinformation often spreads.

However, Edison *is* considering releasing all the inspection photos, though it's unclear precisely when that decision might be made. An educational seminar on San Onofre's spent fuel storage systems and efforts to relocate the waste is planned for 5:30 p.m. Oct. 16, though, so we expect it might come before that. The seminar will be held online via Microsoft Teams, and in real life at San Clemente Casino, 140 Avenida Pico.



Courtesy Southern California Edison

Other news to note:

– Repairs to the pedestrian walkway are coming and will last for four to five months, including restacking rocks and replacing the retaining wall. Heavy equipment work will happen at night, but rocks will be restacked during the day at low tide. The walkway will be closed for about four weeks. Important note: The retaining wall for the walkway is not the same thing as the seawall protecting the plant, which is in good condition, Edison's Ron Pontes said.

-A portion of gunite concrete covering the bluff gave way on Aug. 7. No one was hurt, and bluffs beyond the immediate area were found to be in good condition.

-Small amounts of tritium were detected in water at the site last year, but monitoring shows that levels are dropping, albeit slowly, Pontes said.
-Forty-six of the site's 62 structures have been demolished, and more than 526 million pounds of crushed concrete, steel and debris have been shipped offsite via 2,062 rail cars.



Courtesy Southern California Edison

Activists regularly demand that local governments do more to protest the "beachside nuclear waste dump" at San Onofre. That, unfortunately, is the federal government's purview. Spent Fuel Solutions — a coalition of local governments, businesses and activists — exists to pressure the feds into finally taking some action. The sooner San O's waste can be moved from an earthquake zone near 8 million people, the better.

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https://www.picketfencemedia.com/sanclementetimes/eye-on-sc/san-onofre-panel-reviews-songs-decommissioning-progress/article_91dee1c4-4d2b-4838-8cb4-ccfbcbb638fe.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

San Onofre Panel Reviews SONGS Decommissioning Progress

- San Clemente Times
- By Angélica Escobar
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The San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS), as photographed in 2023.
Photo: Shawn Raymundo

San Onofre's Community Engagement Panel (CEP) convened on Aug. 28 via Microsoft Teams to review dismantlement progress, safety and environmental updates, as well as to take an extended public-comment session centered on inspection transparency for spent-fuel canisters.

Southern California Edison (SCE) reported that overall decommissioning at the San Onofre Nuclear Generation Station (SONGS) is 84% complete and remains on track for year-end 2028, with some final activities possibly extending into early 2029. Recent field work has emphasized removal of large components inside the containment domes and continued waste shipments off-site.

According to the project status presented, "Containment Large Component Removal" is 94% complete, "Reactor Vessel Cut-up and Removal" has reached 63%, and outbound waste shipments are 50% complete — roughly 509 million of 1.02 billion pounds transported to licensed destinations as of the latest tally. Remaining major work includes Demo Package 4, DIE tent installation and site restoration/backfill, each currently listed at 0%.

Safety performance continues to be a focal point. San Onofre Decommissioning Solutions (SDS) cited 2.94 million hours since the last lost-time accident and one OSHA recordable after 1.32 million hours this year, for a Total Recordable Incident Rate (TRIR) of 0.36 — well below typical demolition-sector averages — while pursuing OSHA Voluntary Protection Program status. In his closing summary, CEP Chair Dan Stetson recapped that "there were zero OSHA recordables in 2024 although recently there was a worker who sustained (an) OSHA recordable welding."

Environmental stewardship updates noted crews continuing to work around nesting gulls — with fenced buffer zones installed near the ISFSI walkway — and ongoing Final Status Surveys using both towed-array and tunnel inspections. The meeting recap also referenced a July 21 offsite-power interruption that briefly halted work; the ISFSI diesel generator started promptly, and security features remained operational. On Aug. 7, a portion of gunite on the bluff gave way; no one was hurt and bluffs beyond the immediate area were found to be in good condition.

Staff also reviewed the ongoing groundwater tritium investigation near Unit 2. Monitoring wells continue to show a downward trend, with levels expected to drop below detection over time. The condition appears to have been a transient release traced to the Unit 2 Main Steam Isolation Valve trench, where previously treated water containing tritium was placed. No active remediation is planned, as natural attenuation is reducing concentrations, though sampling will continue until results confirm the decline.

SCE outlined 2026 repairs to the public beach pedestrian walkway: restacking riprap on the northern end and replacing the entire retaining wall along the walkway with corrosion-resistant rebar. The project is slated to last 4-5 months in Q1-Q2 2026, with an anticipated four-week closure during wall replacement and nighttime equipment moves to limit beach impacts. Staff emphasized that the seawall is in good condition and out of scope for this work.

On spent fuel, SCE highlighted the U.S. Department of Energy's evaluation of guided-wave ultrasonic monitoring as a potential long-term canister monitoring tool; SONGS is under consideration as a demonstration site because it maintains a test canister. The panel also previewed an Oct. 16 CEP Educational Seminar on on-site storage and the initiative to relocate offsite; the session will include inspection images reflecting indications found over time, with SCE saying it is considering CEP requests to release all inspection photos. The seminar will be a hybrid at San Clemente Casino and via Microsoft Teams, beginning at 5:30 p.m., with materials expected about a week in advance and a public comment period.

The bulk of the night centered on public comments and questions, largely about inspection transparency and the condition of canister 72 (and, in one case, canister 19). Early in the comment period, longtime participant Gary Headrick pressed for a firm commitment: "I think we could say you're going to show us the photos, and we're not going to stop asking until we see them."

Later, SCE staff responded that canister 72 has been inspected twice and that the Oct. 16 seminar will address images and findings. Regarding canister 19, staff recapped a prior explanation that shavings were analyzed after insertion into the horizontal NUHOMS system and that scratch depth was estimated at about 0.011 inch, which did not meet NRC criteria to trigger a direct inspection under current protocols.

Jennifer Savage, California Policy Associate Director for the Surfrider Foundation, reiterated the organization's position opposing "permanent or long-term storage" of waste at SONGS, citing coastal proximity and a corrosive environment. She urged SCE to strengthen inspection and maintenance and supported expanded monitoring tools, stating, "Evidence of scratching to date is concerning, and we encourage SCE to provide the public with full transparency and employ the precautionary principle to take proactive measures to keep the community and the environment safe."

Some commenters raised questions about where demolition debris and low-level wastes are being sent. It was explained that materials are shipped to licensed facilities in different states depending on classification, with some waste recycled, consistent with prior environmental review. The discussion also touched on emergency preparedness, noting that local agencies maintain independent training and protocols, conduct regular drills with hospitals and continue to participate in the Interjurisdictional Planning Committee. Additional nearby cities are being invited to join.

While the current configuration does not present accident scenarios that would cause an off-site radiological release, first responders still prepare for a range of potential emergencies such as earthquakes, tsunamis or security incidents.

Several questions revisited relocating canisters inland — including to Camp Pendleton. SCE responded that the Coastal Development Permit requires a 2035 return to the California Coastal Commission to reassess site conditions; if relocation on-site is ever required, the reserved higher-elevation area where Units 2 and 3 once stood would be the destination. As for Camp Pendleton, staff reiterated prior Navy/USMC communications that relocating SONGS fuel onto the base is a non-starter.

The panel closed by previewing the Oct. 16 seminar — covering on-site storage, defense-in-depth, canister inspections with images and efforts to clear San Onofre of spent fuel — and the next regular CEP meeting on Nov. 13 focused on DOE's consent-based siting.

Best Regards,
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