

## SONGS CEP Compilation of Public Email Communications

2-25-25 to 4-30-25

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### **1. For Awareness: Coast News Op-Ed on Efficient Spent Nuclear Fuel Solutions by Supervisor Jim Desmond (San Diego, District 5) and an OC Register Article by Teri Sforza on Canada Being Way Ahead of U.S.**

**From:** Lorraine Quinn Sandstrom

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 25, 2025 1:49 PM

**To:** Dan Stetson; VictorCabral; Martha McNicholas; Mike Balsamo; Garry Brown; Jim Desmond; Katrina Foley; Rob Howard; Daniel Whitley; Scott Kibbey; Val Macedo; Marni Magda; Lisa Davis; Ted Quinn; John Taylor; Mel Vernon; Michael Villar; Kelvin Barrios; John Gabbard; Alyssa Napuri; Mark Enmeier; Kristal Jabara;; Mike Sappingfield; Ken Schultz

**Cc:** Manuel Camargo

**Subject:** For Awareness: Coast News Op-Ed on Efficient Spent Nuclear Fuel Solutions by Supervisor Jim Desmond (San Diego, District 5) and an OC Register Article by Teri Sforza On Canada Being Way Ahead of U.S.

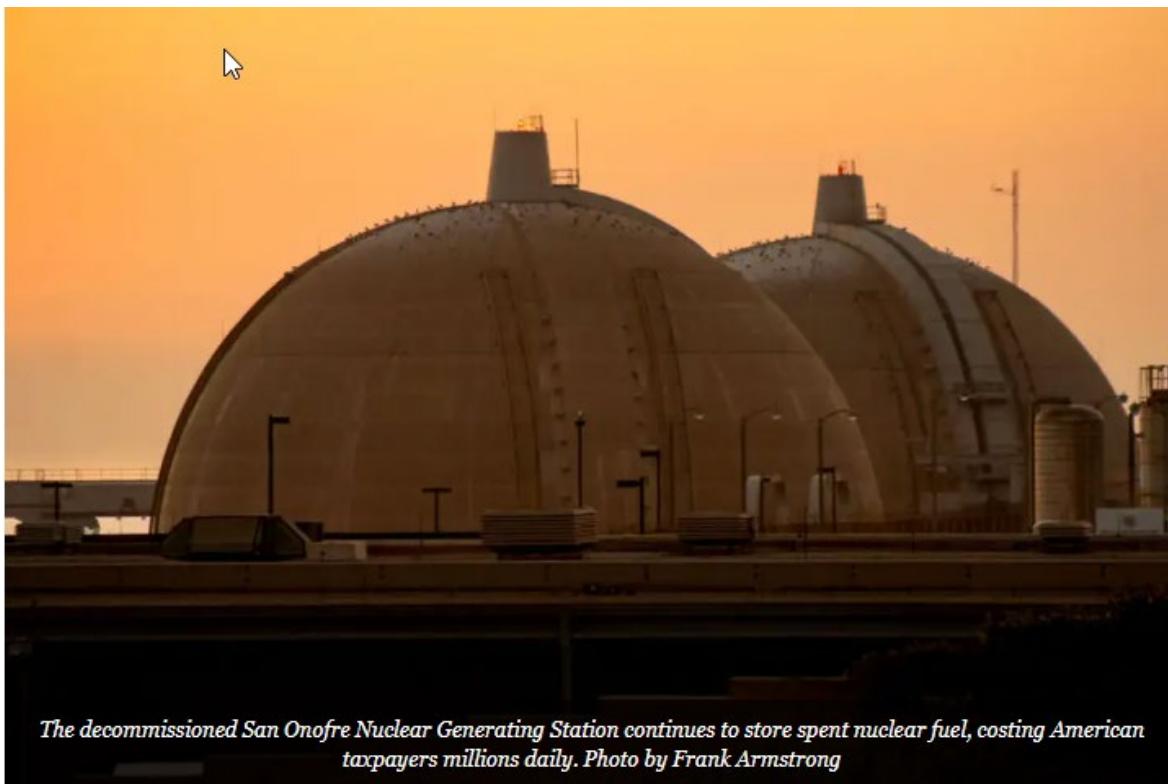
Dear CEP Members and Alternates,

I write to share two recent articles. Coast News published an Op-Ed by Supervisor Jim Desmond (San Diego, District 5), "Efficient spent nuclear fuel solutions an overdue win for taxpayers" and the Orange County Register published an article by Teri Sforza, "Canada is way ahead of us on nuclear waste" regarding yesterday's Spent Fuel Solutions Coalition webinar with Lisa Frizzell of Canada's Nuclear Waste Management Organization.

### **Op-Ed: Efficient spent nuclear fuel solutions an overdue win for taxpayers**

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by [Jim Desmond](#) February 24, 202576

You'd be hard-pressed to find a Southern Californian who doesn't know the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS). It's a landmark we've all seen driving on Interstate 5. What many people don't know is that the facility is also a de facto permanent storage site for spent nuclear fuel. Even fewer people are aware that this situation is a big financial problem for both taxpayers and nuclear utility ratepayers — a problem that only a renewed focus on government efficiency can solve. The federal government has failed to make good on a decades-old legal and contractual obligation to build a permanent spent fuel disposal facility, as established in the [Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982](#).

When a regular person breaks the terms of a contract, they are frequently responsible for paying financial damages. Unfortunately for U.S. taxpayers, the federal government is no different. Because the government has failed to fulfill its obligation to [begin disposing of spent fuel](#) each and every year since 1998, we're on the hook for the costs of continued storage at nuclear reactor sites like SONGS, which is one of 76 sites in 34 states across the country with stranded spent fuel.

Just how much are we paying? It costs taxpayers a mind-boggling \$2 million daily to store spent nuclear fuel on-site. That's on top of the \$10.6 billion we've already paid. This situation isn't fair, and it's not sustainable.

There's also the question of ratepayer dollars. Electric utility customers in San Diego County and nationwide have pre-paid to develop a permanent repository that would house spent fuel deep underground. We've already paid \$46 billion — including interest income — for that purpose, yet taxpayers continue to foot the bill for on-site storage.

To stop the financial waste, we must address the nuclear waste. That's why, four years ago, I took action by signing on as co-chair of the [Spent Fuel Solutions](#) (SFS) coalition to advocate for real solutions at the federal level. I have been working directly with local leaders, members of Congress, and regulatory agencies to push for a clear path forward.

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The Department of Energy was already doing its part by pursuing a collaborative siting process for consolidated interim storage (CIS) facilities. Providing nuclear utilities access to offsite storage would help reduce the financial damages taxpayers currently pay to house spent fuel at nuclear reactor sites. Although DOE's program has been temporarily placed on hold, we are hopeful they will resume work quickly.

In addition to this administrative work, legislative changes will be needed due to limitations in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 that prevent the timely development of spent fuel solutions. Our coalition has adopted policy principles that address these deficiencies and prioritize efficiencies. Specifically, we would like to see the U.S. spent fuel management program transferred to a new organization established for that sole purpose. That organization must also have access to reliable funding.

Current law also includes a rigid linkage between construction authorization for CIS and a repository that must be revised to avoid a decades-long delay in developing temporary storage facilities.

Finally, SFS supports a collaborative repository siting program similar to the ones that have succeeded in Finland, Sweden and other countries. Recently, Canada formally announced the selection of an informed and willing host community.

Residents in the Township of Ignace confirmed their willingness in a vote, with 77% of respondents affirming their support. A majority in the Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation also agreed to host a spent fuel repository. With the site selection complete after a nearly 15-year process, Canada is now poised to begin regulatory reviews.

Legislation that mirrors our coalition's priorities would affect the critical changes necessary to ensure a successful spent fuel management program similar to Canada's. It would also help improve the program's efficiency to safeguard taxpayer dollars and fulfill the federal government's commitment to disposing of spent nuclear fuel.

Our communities deserve more than empty promises. They deserve fiscally responsible leadership that delivers real results. It's time to fix this problem once and for all.

*Jim Desmond represents District 5 on the San Diego County Board of Supervisors.*

## SAN QONOFRE

# Canada is way ahead of us on nuclear waste

Government efficiency is the buzz these days - so why aren't we working harder to stem taxpayer losses of \$2 million each and every day?

That, friends, is what it costs the U.S. government because it has no place to put commercial nuclear waste, a service we ratepayers have already paid for and which the federal government is contractually obligated to provide. Millions of pounds of

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the radioactive stuff lives in concrete a few hundred feet from the ocean at San Onofre - not the most ideal place - as well as at Diablo Canyon and at scores of other commercial nuclear plants in communities throughout the nation.

Communities that never agreed to host "nuclear waste dumps," as critics say.

So it was with glimmers of hope that Southern California's Spent Fuel Solutions coalition heard Monday about the monumental steps forward taken by the Great White North: Canada has chosen a site for a deep geological repository for nuclear waste at Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation/Township of Ignace in northwestern Ontario.

Canada is way ahead of us here (and Finland and Sweden are way ahead of Canada).

Lisa Frizzell of Canada's Nuclear Waste Management Organization explained how it managed to find an "informed and willing host community," even as obstacles remain.

Step one might be this: NWMO's creation was mandated by the government, but it's not part of the government. Rather, it's a not-for-profit established by Canada's nuclear electricity producers, as detailed in Canada's Nuclear Fuel Waste Act in 2002.

There were decades of technical studies to find the right geography. Field studies to understand rock characteristics. Bedrock surveys at the surface and deep underground. Borehole drilling. But, as in America, the issue with constructing these facilities has never been the science, but the social.

"Though it may look like a tech project, it's an emotional issue," Frizzell said. "It's important to listen.... There's a lot of misinformation and misconception out there, and the fear or concern is real, even if the facts they thought it was based on are not."

That meant funding for and a heavy investment in working directly with communities, answering their questions, addressing their concerns, explaining how things work. The repository would be about as deep underground as the Empire State Building is tall and would have redundant safeguards so that if one barrier failed, another was there to protect it.

"It ensures fuel and people safe essentially forever," Frizzell said.

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This multigenerational project would stretch over 175 years. Construction costs are pegged at a modest \$4.5 billion, with total long-term costs of some \$26 billion (in 2020 Canadian dollars or about \$21 billion in today's American dollars). Compare that to the \$30 billion to

\$50 billion the U.S. is slated to pay directly to utilities for babysitting the waste, and that's before any repository is built.

The Canadian repository's economic impact- hundreds of jobs, infrastructure investment, growing communities - generated a good bit of interest. In 2010, Ignace formally said it wanted to explore its potential to host, and last year, it was chosen.

"The site has great rock," Frizzell said. "We're confident we can move forward safely. We've kicked the tires from every possible angle."

Canada's plan is now moving forward with "informed and willing hosts, where the municipality, Indigenous peoples, communities and others in the area are working together to implement it," the agency says on its website. "We remain committed to continuous study and active engagement with these communities."

But the decision, of course, is not without controversy.

Some in the area passionately object, citing equity issues and respect for the Indigenous people who'd be hosting this waste for generations to come.

"The proposal is to store it in a large hole within the earth," wrote Chief Ron Tremblay, whose traditional name translates to "Morningstar burning," in the forward to a critical report. "What's below the earth? What are the harms to the aquifers and to the life inside Earth? Will this open the opportunity to various countries like the United States to come and dump their waste into that site? Those are my concerns.

"Nuclear reactors are fueled with uranium mined on Indigenous lands. Go ask our sisters and brothers of the Navajo Nation about the despair they live with, from the birth defects and stillborn children and the high rates of cancer within their nation."

There has been a request for judicial review of the site selection, Frizzell said, and that's no longer unexpected.

"We've been engaging with multiple First Nations for many years, and we are committed to continuing to do that," she said. "It will be a long and collaborative

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and engaging process. Just because we selected a site doesn't mean we're done. There's a lot of work to do."

NWMO recognizes that Indigenous people have been treated very poorly and has a "huge commitment to reconciliation," she said.

Will the fight be as fierce as Nevada's against Yucca Mountain? The big difference may be that Canada really took the community outreach bit to heart and would engage only with willing communities, an approach that the U.S. Department of Energy has recently adopted.

Obviously, that doesn't mean it's smooth sailing.

"I'd like to share a parable," Tremblay wrote. "Just imagine if we built birch bark canoes without paddles.... Today it would be like if you made a vehicle without brakes or without safety features like seatbelts or airbags. That's exactly what is occurring: They created all these nuclear sites without any future idea or intent of where to store the nuclear waste. This is our concern. We believe that the Earth is our Mother, and that she has been violated, she has been hurt, she has been raped, she has been damaged for far, far too long."

That profound lack of foresight was a global fail, but others are doing more to address it than we are. Canada is even looking forward rather than simply backward: It's starting work on another disposal site for intermediate-level waste, expected from next-generation nuclear reactors.

The Spent Fuel Solutions coalition includes local governments in Orange and San Diego counties, as well as Southern California Edison and San Diego Gas & Electric, San Onofre's owners. Its mission is to goad the federal government to action: Under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, the feds were required to start taking possession of commercial nuclear waste in 1998. More than a quarter of a century later, however, it has still failed to collect a single ounce. And some \$47 billion sits in a trust fund, waiting.

"It's comforting to us that a thoughtful process can lead to the kind of result you've accomplished," Chris Wahl, the coalition's executive director, told Frizzell.

Or, in Canadian, "Good luck, eh?"

*Lorraine Sandstrom*

Community Affairs and Relations, Senior Specialist

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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. FYA: NRC Violation for Repeat Procedural Non-Compliance

**From:** Manuel Camargo

**Sent:** Friday, February 28, 2025 4:48 PM

**To:** Daniel T. Stetson; VictorCabral; Martha McNicholas; Mike Balsamo; Garry Brown; Jim Desmond; Katrina Foley; Rob Howard; Daniel Whitley; Scott Kibbey; Val Macedo; Marni Magda; Lisa Davis; Ted Quinn; John Taylor; Mel Vernon; Michael Villar; Kelvin Barrios; Alyssa Napuri; Mark Enmeier; Kristal Jabara; John Gabbard; Mike Sappingfield; Ken Schultz

**Cc:** Lorraine Quinn Sandstrom; Fred M Bailly; Liese Mosher; Mark E Morgan

**Subject:** FYA: NRC Violation for Repeat Procedural Non-Compliance

Dear SONGS CEP Members and Alternates,

Due to three “hot work” procedure non-compliance events and a related gap in a corrective action program at SONGS, the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issued SCE a Level IV Cited Violation on February 26. This type of violation is considered to have a very low safety significance and is the lowest level issued by the NRC.

During the December to February timeframe, two events involving welding and a third involving torch cutting occurred. In all cases, the hot work was closer to combustible materials than permitted by procedure. However, fire watch personnel were consistently on hand, and no flames were observed.

SCE is disappointed that this happened at all, let alone more than once, and stopped all hot work while we evaluated and developed new corrective actions. Work was restarted on February 24.

SCE remains committed, in its decommissioning oversight role, to ensuring strict adherence to all procedures and the effective implementation of the NRC’s expectations for a positive safety culture, which includes rigorous problem identification and resolution in the corrective action program.

SCE staff will discuss this matter at the upcoming March 20 meeting of the SONGS Community Engagement Panel.

Best regards,

Manuel

Manuel C. Camargo Jr.  
Principal Manager, Strategic Planning  
Southern California Edison | SONGS Decommissioning

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### **3. For Awareness: Orange County Register Article re: Bill to Modify California Moratorium for Small Modular Reactors**

**From:** Lorraine Quinn Sandstrom

**Sent:** Tuesday, April 22, 2025 7:25 AM

**To:** Daniel T. Stetson; VictorCabral; Martha McNicholas; Michelle Anderson; Mike Balsamo; Garry Brown; Jim Desmond; Katrina Foley; Rob Howard; Daniel Whitley; Scott Kibbey; Val Macedo; Marni Magda; Lisa Davis; Ted Quinn; John Taylor; Mel Vernon; Michael Villar; Alyssa Napuri; Mark Enmeier; Kristal Jabara; John Gabbard; Mike Sappingfield; Ken Schultz

**Cc:** Manuel Camargo

**Subject:** For Awareness: Orange County Register Article re: Bill to Modify California Moratorium for Small Modular Reactors

Dear CEP Members and Alternates,

I write to share a recent article in the Orange County Register regarding a bill to modify the California moratorium for small modular reactors.

Kind 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 • Opinion Columnist

# Time for California to embrace nuclear power again?

Column: Bill would carve out exceptions to Golden State's ban



NuScale VOYGR™ SMR power plant (via Nuclear Regulatory Commission)



By **TERI SFORZA** | tsforza@scng.com | Orange County Register

UPDATED: April 19, 2025 at 7:04 AM PDT

Should next-generation nuclear reactors be part of California's energy future?

A provocative question, given that the Golden State officially forbids construction of new nuclear facilities until the [federal government figures out what the heck to do with the radioactive waste we're already stuck with](#) (including 3.6 million pounds on a scenic bluff overlooking the blue Pacific at San Onofre).

Enter now a bill introduced by a Fresno Democrat, and co-authored by Assemblymember Diane Dixon, R-Newport Beach, suggesting this ban may be a relic of California's flower power/peace sign/hippie counterculture past. [Assembly Bill 305](#) would exempt small modular reactors from the ban, and is slated for a hearing Monday in the Assembly's Natural Resources Committee.

The rest of the world never stopped moving forward, Dixon said. It's time California moves with it.

"I'm no nuclear engineer, but the concept of adding to our renewable energy arsenal seems like a good one to help us toward the net zero carbon goal by 2045," she said. "This is an excellent step forward to review and validate alternative energy sources, and small nuclear modular reactors have a lot of potential."

To be clear, we're not talking about more Diablo Canyons here.



Dry storage for nuclear waste at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station  
(Photo by Jeff Gritchen, Orange County Register/SCNG)



Aerial view of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant in San Luis Obispo County  
(Mark Ralston/AFP via Getty Images/TNS)

Read More

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02:00

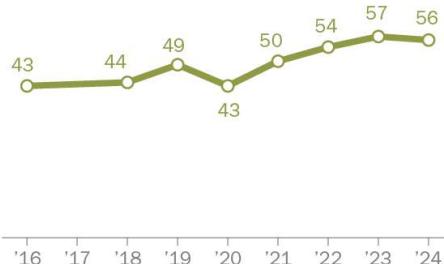
Diablo's two reactors generate about 18 million megawatts; this bill would exempt reactors producing a wee fraction of that — up to 300 megawatts — from California's long-standing moratorium. It would also require the state Public Utilities Commission to adopt a plan to increase the procurement of electricity from nuclear, and to phase out natural gas, by Jan. 1, 2028.

"When we're stymied and stalled, it's time to look at other ideas," Dixon said. "When I saw this bill, I said, 'I'll sign on.' Somebody has to advance nuclear and start looking at this as a viable option in our menu of renewables. Nuclear is clean and cheap and doable in smaller reactors, and can be part of our net-zero carbon goal by 2045."

While strong opposition to nuclear energy remains among many [critics who say it's unsafe](#) — especially those close to the San Onofre and Diablo Canyon plants — the bill's authors say they just want to drag California into the 21st century. A recent [Pew Research Center survey](#) found that a majority of

### Majority of Americans continue to support more nuclear power in the U.S.

*% of U.S. adults who favor more nuclear power plants to generate electricity in the country*



Note: Respondents who gave other responses or did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 13-19, 2024.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

How to address [the waste problem, which continues to vex us?](#) Dixon doesn't claim to have the answer to this, but perhaps the smaller amount of waste generated by these smaller reactors will be less objectionable, she said.

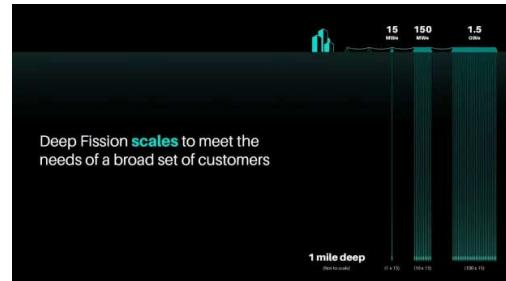
And there is an extremely interesting twist on the waste dilemma in the works. Deep Fission — which calls itself "the pioneering nuclear energy startup revolutionizing the industry by placing reactors a mile underground" — has teamed up with Deep Isolation, a Berkeley company whose [answer to the waste problem is a miles-deep, vertical borehole that curves horizontally at the bottom, to isolate nuclear waste even further.](#)

This month, the two companies signed a memorandum of understanding to collaborate on spent fuel management for Deep Fission's advanced underground reactors.

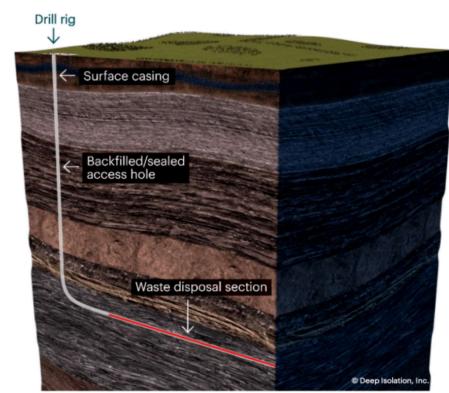
That could sidestep official paralysis on the waste issue almost entirely.

"Under the MOU, Deep Isolation and Deep Fission will explore the potential licensing and use of Deep Isolation's patented underground disposal technology for managing spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste from Deep Fission's underground reactors," [an announcement from the companies said.](#) "This partnership enables Deep Fission to offer an end-to-end solution that includes both energy generation and long-term waste management."

The reactor company will integrate the disposal company's deep borehole technology into its operations, providing "a seamless, long-term waste solution," they said.



Screenshot of Deep Fission web site



(Courtesy Deep Isolation)

"Nuclear power generation requires a waste disposal solution, and responsible users should plan for waste management from the start," said a prepared statement from Elizabeth Muller, CEO of Deep Fission. "Deep geological disposal is the globally preferred approach, and while other countries are advancing underground repositories, there is an opportunity for the U.S. to take further steps in this direction. Deep Isolation's solution presents an attractive option for Deep Fission as we work toward a sustainable nuclear future."

AB 305 [is not the first bill to propose exempting small-scale reactors from California's ban](#), and it may not be the last. But Americans in both parties now see nuclear power more positively than they did earlier this decade, Pew's survey said, and its day may well be coming. Again.

*Originally Published: April 19, 2025 at 7:00 AM PDT*

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### 4. For Awareness: SFS Coalition & SONGS CEP Host Webinar Nov. 21, 2024, with Rep. Mike Levin to Discuss Nuclear Waste Administration Act of 2024

**From:** Lorraine Quinn Sandstrom

**Date:** Monday, April 14, 2025 at 4:17 PM

**To:** Daniel T. Stetson, VictorCabral, Martha McNicholas, Michelle Anderson, Mike Balsamo, Garry Brown, Jim Desmond, Katrina Foley, Rob Howard, Daniel Whitley, Scott Kibbey, Val Macedo, Marni Magda, Lisa Davis, Ted Quinn, John Taylor, Mel Vernon, Michael Villar, Alyssa Napuri <, Mark Enmeier, Kristal Jabara, John Gabbard, Mike Sappingfield, Ken Schultz

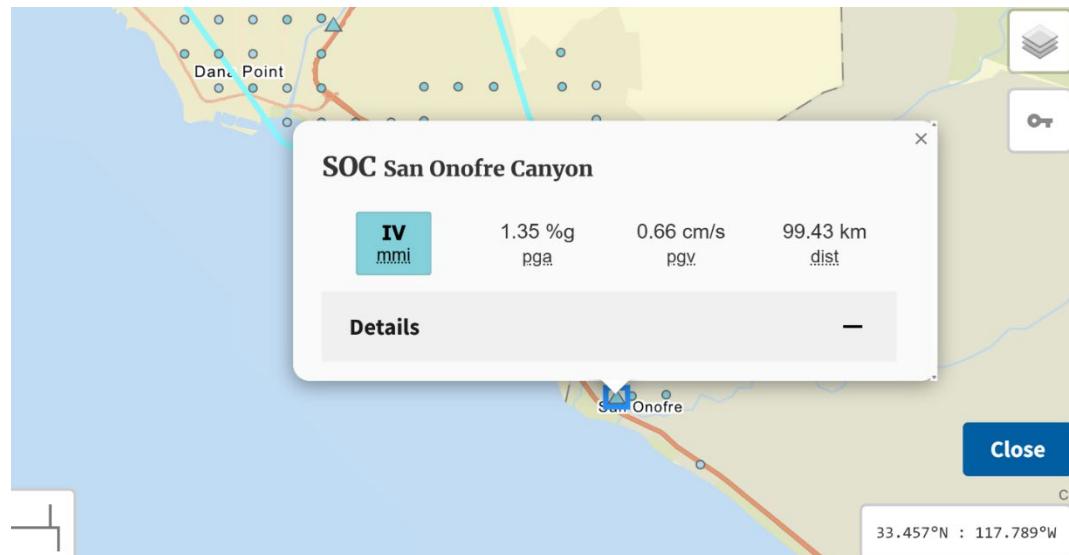
**Cc:** Manuel Camargo

**Subject:** For Awareness: Seismic Safety at SONGS Plant Following Today's Earthquake in Julian, California  
Dear CEP Members.

For your awareness, we want to share the following information regarding the 5.2 magnitude earthquake felt 5 kilometers south of Julian, California and as far north as Orange County this morning. The San Onofre Canyon accelerometer is located just north of SONGS. Below is a snapshot from the United States Geological Survey website [www.usgs.gov](http://www.usgs.gov), which we use to indicate the peak ground acceleration (pga) at SONGS. The indicated pga at this location was 1.35%g or 0.0135g (g refers to the force of gravity). The design basis for the Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI) at the plant is 1.5g, which means the ISFSI is built to withstand an earthquake over 100 times the one we had this morning. Inspections were performed and found no damage.

The following link more information on seismic safety at SONGS.

[Seismic Safety at SONGS | SONGS](#)



Best Regards,

*Lorraine Sandstrom*

Community Affairs and Relations, Senior Specialist

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Community Engagement Panel (CEP) Management and Stakeholder Engagement (DA Complex B)  
Southern California Edison, San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS)

### **5. For Awareness: Notice Regarding SONGS Transformer Oil Leak**

**From:** Lorraine Quinn Sandstrom

**Sent:** Wednesday, April 30, 2025 9:48 AM

**To:** Daniel T. Stetson; VictorCabral; Martha McNicholas; Michelle Anderson; Mike Balsamo; Garry Brown; Jim Desmond; Katrina Foley; Rob Howard; Daniel Whitley; Scott Kibbey; Val Macedo; Marni Magda; Lisa Davis; Ted Quinn; John Taylor; Mel Vernon; Michael Villar; Alyssa Napuri; Mark Enmeier; McDonald, Hunter; John Gabbard; Mike Sappingfield

**Cc:** Manuel Camargo

**Subject:** For Awareness: Notice Regarding SONGS Transformer Oil Leak

Dear CEP Members and Alternates,

On the morning of Wednesday, April 23, SCE and San Onofre DecommissioningSolutions (SDS) became aware of a mineral oil leak from a refurbished SDS oil filled electrical transformer that arrived at the SONGS site late the night before. A total of approximately 10 to 25 gallons leaked from the transformer in two separate locations, one on the parking lot adjacent to the SCE office complex (SONGS property) and another at the entrance to San Onofre State Beach (State Parks property). Immediate actions were taken by SDS to isolate, control, and mitigate leakage of oil from the transformer at both locations. The supplier of the transformer promptly dispatched a team to SONGS to drain and collect the remaining oil from the transformer. The oil collected from the transformer and the transformer were removed from the SONGS site in the early afternoon of April 23.

At no time was access to the San Onofre Beach interrupted and at no time did any oil leak into stormwater catch basins or any tributaries to the ocean. For awareness, the mineral oil used in the transformer did not contain PCBs.

SCE notified the following agencies on April 23: California State Parks (San Onofre State Beach), San Diego Department of Environmental Health, California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

On Thursday, April 24, the transformer supplier dispatched a hazardous waste services company (Clean Harbors) to cleanup and dispose of materials from both areas impacted by the leaked mineral oil. Both locations were also regraded.

Additional actions are being taken to prevent reoccurrence. SCE will discuss the event during the June 12 CEP meeting.

Thank you,

*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)