

NO NEW NUCLEAR REACTORS AT EXELON'S CLINTON SITE

To Whom It May Concern:

We, the undersigned organizations and businesses, **OPPOSE** any plans by Exelon to secure an Early Site Permit to construct a new nuclear reactor at its Clinton facility in Illinois. The site is unsuitable, and many important factors are not being considered in the decision of whether to approve Exelon's application for an Early Site Permit (ESP) at the site. Constructing a new reactor in Illinois would not benefit residents due to the already existing surplus of energy; it would also create an additional security threat as well as a creating other negative effects. For example:

- ✓ Nuclear power has proven to be expensive—exceeding estimated costs due to nuclear expenses that exceeded budget by billions of dollars. The first 75 reactors constructed in the U.S. had a combined cost overrun of over \$100 billion. The average reactor ran 400% over budget and was over 4 years late in start up. The last reactor in the U.S. to be completed, the Watts Bar plant in Tennessee, was finally opened in 1996, 23 years after it was proposed. It cost \$8 billion.

Additionally, Illinoisans paid the highest electric rates in the Mid-west during the 1980s and 1990s, partially due to the impact of nuclear power construction. Illinois currently houses more nuclear reactors than any other state, creating a surplus of electrical generating capacity. Local residents would be forced to live with the safety and health risks of a new reactor without reaping any benefits. Exelon's goal is simply to make money, not serve the needs of Illinoisans.

- ✓ Clean energy and energy efficiency may be safer, cheaper alternatives to the high prices and safety threats posed by the construction of new nuclear reactors. These alternatives are currently not being considered as part of the Early Site Permit (ESP) process and have been opposed by Exelon. Wind power, one of the fastest growing alternative energy sources in the world, has great potential in Illinois. The development of wind power in Illinois has the potential to create more jobs per investment dollar than does nuclear power.
- ✓ Nuclear facilities have been shown to have significant gaps and flaws in security. Several years following the September 11th attacks, legislation meant to improve security at nuclear power plants has remains to be enacted. In a time of increased terrorist threat, constructing new nuclear power plants—a proved al Qaeda target—increases physical and economic risks to central Illinois residents, Exelon shareholders, and nuclear industry employees which in the case of Clinton is less than a 30-minute flight from one of the world's busiest airports at O'Hare. Terrorist threats may also lead to severe restrictions on public access to Clinton Lake, as has already happened, adversely impacting local businesses and property values.

- ✓ The issue of waste disposal remains an unsolved problem for all nuclear facilities. Lacking a proper waste plan and a secure location to transport the waste, the construction of all new nuclear facilities should be put on hold, as required by Illinois state law. The proposed Yucca Mountain repository in Nevada will not open until 2010 at the *earliest*, but even industry experts feel 2015 is a more realistic best-case scenario. That doesn't count the remaining scientific questions about the suitability of the site, and half-dozen lawsuits currently pending—any of which could sent the U.S. Department of Energy back to the drawing board. Even if the facility were to be opened, it's not large enough to hold all of the waste created by currently operating nuclear plants. Constructing new reactors will only worsen that problem.
- ✓ Emergency plans for dealing with an accident of terrorist attack are inadequate, relying heavily on questionable trained and equipped teachers, bus drivers, doctors and other civilians and the Illinois National Guard—which may not be available if deployed elsewhere—to facilitate an evacuation, without taking into account the possibility of role abandonment. Studies of the Three Mile Island accident, which took place in 1979 in Pennsylvania, found that doctors and other key workers abandoned their posts up to 25 miles from the site to tend to their families or save themselves. In the case of a more severe accident, heroic actions would be required to successfully carry out an evacuation.

In light of these concerns, we urge the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to **DENY** Exelon's application for an Early Site Permit, and for Exelon to instead focus on developing alternative methods of addressing expected increasing energy demands over the coming years.

Sincerely,