

SAMUEL LAWRENCE FOUNDATION

Samuel Lawrence Foundation

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Via Electronic Mail

To: San Diego County Board of Supervisors
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335
San Diego, CA 92101

From: Samuel Lawrence Foundation

Date: 2/19/26

Re: **Profound opposition to the inclusion of nuclear waste reprocessing (often referred to in recent discussions as "recycling") as a potential solution in your upcoming 90-day report.**

Dear San Diego County Board of Supervisors,

The undersigned organizations and persons share your urgent goal of moving the 3.6 million pounds of spent nuclear fuel off the crumbling, seismically active coastline at San Onofre. We thank you for taking the initiative to find a solution. However, we are writing to express our profound opposition to the inclusion of nuclear waste reprocessing (often referred to in recent discussions as "recycling") as a potential solution in your upcoming 90-day report.

While the term "recycling" suggests an environmentally friendly closed loop, the scientific reality of nuclear reprocessing is precisely the opposite. It is a hazardous chemical process that increases waste volume, threatens public health, and introduces serious national security risks.

As your staff prepares recommendations, we strongly urge the Board to oppose reprocessing based on the following well-documented:

- **Massive Increase in Waste Complexity:** Reprocessing does not eliminate waste. It dissolves solid, contained spent fuel in boiling nitric acid, generating millions of gallons of high-level liquid radioactive waste. This waste is significantly harder to manage and far more prone to environmental release than solid fuel.
- **Proliferation and National Security Risks:** Reprocessing separates pure plutonium, the primary material used in nuclear weapons. Expanded reprocessing would increase the global availability of weapons-usable material, turning the transport and handling into a

major security liability.

- **Economic and Commercial Failure:** The only commercial plant at West Valley, NY, failed after only six years, leaving a cleanup burden exceeding \$5 billion. Federal reprocessing sites operated by the Department of Energy's (DOE), including Hanford, have become environmental catastrophes. At Hanford, radioactive acid corroded storage tanks, releasing over a million gallons of waste into the soil and threatening the Columbia River.
- **Decades of Delay:** There are currently no commercial or federal facilities in the United States capable of reprocessing San Onofre's spent fuel. Pursuing this option would require decades of federal permitting and construction, effectively locking the waste at San Onofre for generations while awaiting infrastructure that does not presently exist.

Given the site-specific and escalating risks posed by sea-level rise and seismic activity, we respectfully request that the 90-day report focus on options for urgent relocation in California. This should include exploring collaboration with other municipal governments, such as the City of Irvine, while we await the federal government's completion of a national final repository. We urge you to exclude reprocessing from your recommendations and instead focus on proven, non-chemical storage and disposal solutions. We look forward to meeting with your staff to offer technical expertise and support the development of the safest possible best path forward, one that protects both our national security and the San Diego coastline.

Signatures:

Organizations

Beyond Nuclear
Sierra Club, San Diego Chapter
San Diego United Lions Club
Ecological Options Network
Nuclear Energy Information Services
Committee to Bridge the Gap
Nevada Nuclear Waste Task Force
GREENPEACE U.S.A.
NUKEWATCH
Citizens' Oversight
Nuclear Watch South
Intelligent Energy & Conservation Policy
Safe Energy Rights Group
CalSafe Nuclear Waste Storage Plan Advocates
Coalition for Nuclear Safety
Belly Up Tavern
North American Climate, Conservation, and Environment
Parents Against SSFL
Green Party of Orange County
Cross Consulting
PeaceWorks KC
Samuel Lawrence Foundation

Individuals

Jill Crary, 92117
Ron Frank, 90086
Shari Horne, 92637
Richard Solomon, 94611
Barbara Carr, 21093
Bertin Loyola, 92069
Carol Collins, 19904
Kevin Bowen, 92091
Barbara Fox, 92672
Stephanie Tarkington, 92014
Lee Ann Goya, 90291
Len Hering Sr., RADM, USN, 32068
Sheila Fink, 91942
Sasha Taus, 93420
Madge Torres, 92024
Alan M Solomon, 90064
Keith Fink, 92107
Darlene St. Martin, 98273
Mark Lortie, 92037
Jon Alper, 92037
Linda Pentz Gunter, 20912

Reprocessing Nuclear Waste is Dirty, Dangerous, and Expensive

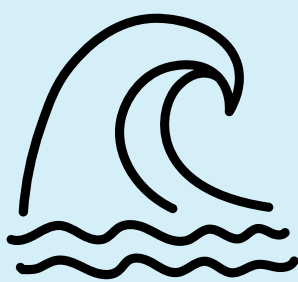
The problem:

3.6 million pounds of nuclear waste



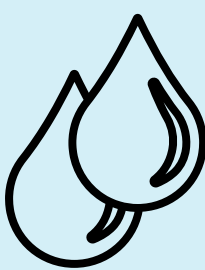
50-mile

radius of 9
million people



100 feet

from the
beach



18 inches

above
groundwater



Risk Zone

earthquakes
sea level rise

A major accident at San Onofre would be devastating

Massive toll on
people's health for
generations

Air, land & sea
damaged for
decades

Southern
California's vibrant
economy crushed

Animals & habitats
destroyed

Reprocessing: A Red Herring

DIRTY

Reprocessing doesn't eliminate waste. It makes it harder to manage.

DANGEROUS

Reprocessing creates the primary material used in nuclear weapons - a national security risk.

EXPENSIVE

The only U.S. reprocessing plant failed after 6 years & generated \$5 billion+ in cleanup costs.

Real Solutions for the Waste

Move to safer, more appropriate location

MOVE

Monitor & inspect canisters, not just video imaging

MONITOR

Repackage into canisters that are safe for long-term

REPACKAGE