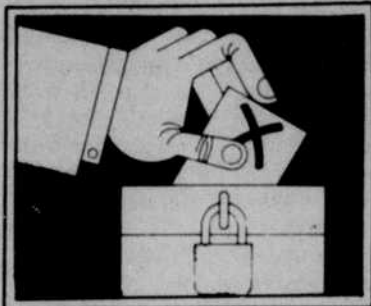


Measure may cease operation of nuclear plant

By Shawn Wirtz
Of the Emerald

Ballot Measure 14, if passed, would force the closure of the Trojan nuclear power plant until wastes currently stored on site can be deposited at a federally licensed repository.

But both proponents and opponents say the measure could have the effect of permanently closing the plant.



Conflicting studies have been performed to determine the economic impacts of closing Trojan based on differing sets of assumptions. Portland General Electric concluded it would cost the company \$832 million if Trojan were shut down. But according to Jack Kapuscinski of Forelaws on Board, "What

they're not including in that are the costs of decommissioning, removing the waste, or an accident."

Another PGE study, based on models provided by the Northwest Power Planning Council, determined the total costs of permanently closing the plant to the region to be \$1.4 billion. According to a memorandum circulated by Lynn Frank of the Oregon Department of Energy, both studies have "a reasonable estimate of the costs."

The department criticized a Salem Electric Board-commissioned study by Energy Systems Research Group, Inc., which reports ratepayers will save \$24 million if the measure passes. According to the memorandum, "The Salem Electric study is seriously flawed and should not be considered."

The study's assumption that Trojan operates at 53 percent capacity is too low, said Phil Carver of the ODE planning division. He said the plant's operating averages for 1980, 1981, 1984 and 1985 are 64 percent. The plant was shut down

in 1982 and 1983 because it was cheaper for PGE to buy surplus hydroelectric power from the Bonneville Power Administration.

Also, the ESRG study excluded capacity costs, a fee based on the maximum monthly rate of use, Carver added.

Additionally, Clarice Barnes, member of the No on 14 Committee, said passage of the measure would cost jobs. "Annual operations, maintenance and capital expenses of about \$30 million would not be spent if Trojan shuts down. This figure includes 1,200 temporary employees for annual maintenance and refueling," Barnes said.

Trojan's routine operations provide 926 full-time jobs.

Because the measure allows for reactivating the plant if the Oregon Legislature declares an emergency need for power, and the voters accept a repeal, the PGE study included the costs of maintaining the plant in preparation for any emergency need.

Citizens for Responsible

Radioactive Waste Disposal said the maintenance is unnecessary, but Barnes said, "The very fact that it says we could be bringing it back on line requires maintenance."

PGE has a contract that requires the federal government to accept spent fuel from Trojan by 1998. According to Carver, the possibility that Trojan could reopen prior to 2001 is "virtually zero." He said, "The 2001 date is one of these if-everything-goes-right numbers."

While PGE's contract only requires the government to accept the waste, it does not require the government to place it in a permanent storage site. According to a memorandum released by Bill Dixon of ODE, "The ballot measure would only permit Trojan to resume operations if the waste is being sent to a licensed repository for permanent disposal. Instead, it may be headed for federal storage facilities."

Citizens for Responsible Radioactive Waste Disposal criticized the PGE study

because "the resulting benefit to ratepayers of extending Trojan's operating life is ignored."

Although the ballot measure doesn't call for a permanent shut-down, that is the goal of the measure's proponents, said Kapuscinski.

Bruce Philbrick, energy issues coordinator for the University Survival Center, said, "This could deal the entire nuclear industry a severe blow, which is what we want to accomplish."

The main issue is one of safety because the waste is stored "in a pre-fabricated metal building 100 feet away from the Columbia River," Kapuscinski said.

According to Barnes, "The building is five-feet reinforced concrete walls, eight-feet reinforced concrete floor and located on bedrock. The base of the facility is 21 feet above the 10,000-year flood level. We don't have a dangerous facility here." The site has been approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Energy Facility Siting Council.

Whaling business discussed

By Karen Creighton
Of the Emerald

Whaling soon will be an obsolete business due to environmental legislation of the last two decades, according to three experts on whale conservation.

The experts spoke Monday during "Whale Day" at the University School of Law.

The politics of the International Whaling Commission are "about to bring to end an industry that has been in existence for thousands of years," said John Byrne, Oregon State University president and former director of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration. Byrne explained how the IWC has changed its role from that of whale catching to whale conservation since its beginning in 1946.

Negotiating with countries such as Japan and Norway for the protection of whales involves political concerns beyond environmental law. Questions of international law and trade are real concerns in creating legislation to ban whaling, he said.

Constitutional issues of environmental legislation also were addressed. "Does the president of the United States have the option to override domestic legislation when it's in the interest of foreign policy? That's a dandy of a question," Byrne said.

A recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling on a lawsuit filed by environmentalists upheld the Reagan administration's former agreements with the Japanese government. The suit was filed by environmental groups who believe laws to protect whales were not being properly enforced. The case itself may not have changed legislation, but it may have helped U.S. negotiations with Japan by making the U.S.

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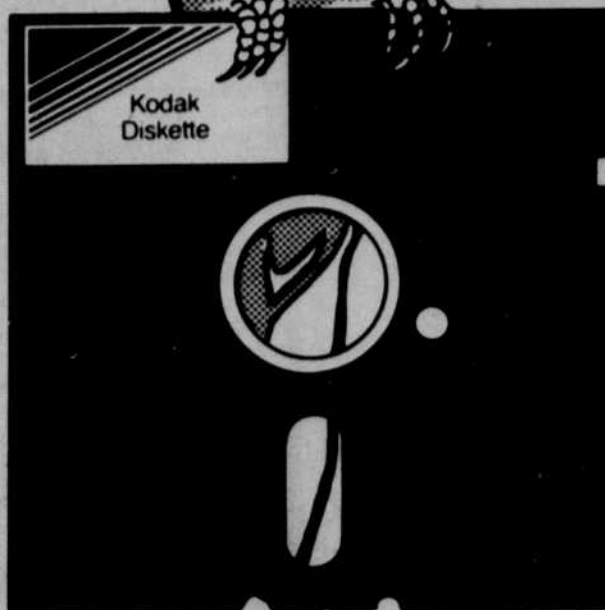
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