Reacting Responsibly

Since nuclear waste cannot be moved off the shoreline until an approved off-site storage facility is available, the Surfrider Foundation is pressing for action at the federal level in order to remove nuclear waste off our coastline. Our goal is to reach an agreement for a consent-based permanent repository.

Radiating Public Awareness

WHY THIS ISSUE REQUIRES ACTION TO PROTECT OUR COAST

The San Onofre Nuclear Station (SONGS) has become a threat to our treasured recreational coastal spots and our livelihood—in which Surfrider must uphold the responsibility to pressure for law and policy decision-making that positively impacts our community and coastal environment.

With inevitable leaks, spills, or human error, we cannot ignore the responsibility our society has to safely discard nuclear waste. To achieve this, Surfrider needs your help, advocating for a geologically secure repository that will ensure the health of both, our environment and population, is protected.

Environmental Implications

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE NOW

Ocean water in the south-flowing California Current sustains coastal fisheries, and San Diego County is home to critical native plant and animal species. Over 70 miles of coastline in the Southern California area alone are all at risk to be completely destroyed by nuclear waste leaks caused by geological activity or human error.

Finding a Solution

Surfrider is opposed to the permanent or long-term storage of radioactive waste at the recently deactivated SONGS due to its proximity to the coastline, susceptibility to geological instability, and location within a densely populated area. Nearly 8 million people reside in the vicinity, and it is directly adjacent to one of the United States’ busiest highways. Surfrider is actively engaged in advocating for the removal of the nuclear waste as quickly as possible while adhering to the following requirements:

1. Agreement on a federally approved location
2. Geologically secure location for the health of our environment and affected communities
3. Consent based permanent repository for all stakeholders
4. Within a specific timeline with a sense of urgency

The History and Five W’s

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SONGS

SONGS was built in 1968. The site’s operators installed “functionality upgrades” in 2010, whose improper maintenance resulted in a leak of radioactive material. This leak and subsequent maintenance and safety-related issues inevitably resulted in the plant’s decommissioning in 2013. With no federal storage site available for nuclear waste, the 3.6 million pounds of waste created over the span of 30 years, now remains stuck on California’s dynamic and receding shoreline.

WHAT IS THE DECOMMISSIONING PROCESS LIKE?

When nuclear facilities are no longer serviced, they begin the process of “shutting it down,” whereas demolishing an ordinary structure might be demolished. But with nuclear waste facilities, they must follow safe storage criteria for the nuclear waste until it can be moved at a later date.

WHAT IS A PERMANENT REPOSITORY?

A previously proposed, but unsuccessfully executed, long-term solution has been to designate a permanent repository. This is simply a location where nuclear waste can be properly disposed of. The site must meet the Nuclear Regulatory Commission standards, be rural for health of communities, and ideally be underground.
Over 3 Million Pounds of high-level radioactive waste rests just 100 feet from a popular surf beach, 50 miles from the densely populated urban areas of San Diego and Los Angeles, and alongside the nation’s busiest transportation corridor.

Community Concerns

WHY CONSEQUENCES IN THE FUTURE REQUIRE ACTION NOW

The San Clemente community nearest to the waste is home to beach breaks and surf spots, such as the San Onofre State Beach and Trestles, that have made substantial impacts on the local community and surf culture at large. These are located yards from the power plant. Like these treasured sections of the coast, most, if not all, California beaches would be uninhabitable by humans for longer than we will exist as a result of a nuclear waste leak or accident.

Make Waves in Federal Policy

TAKE ACTION

With your support, we can provide a voice that is able to be heard at the federal level to remove nuclear waste off the California coast and into a consent-based permanent repository.

Sign the Petition

Support a federally approved, consent-based, and geologically secure permanent repository so nuclear waste can be moved off the California coastline.

Contact Us

The Surfrider Foundation
9883 Pacific Heights Blvd
San Diego, CA 92121
(619) 622-9661
info@surfrider.org

What is spent fuel and how is it stored at SONGS?

Waste at SONGS is stored both in a cooling pool and in dry casks. Beginning December 2017, the plant plans to transfer all leftover waste in the cooling pool to dry casks. The waste will be placed in sealed steel canisters and then wrapped in concrete either above ground or partly buried.

Although there are varying degrees of hazardous waste, nuclear waste has the highest risk for human and environmental health concerns. It retains massive amounts of radiation for over 100,000 years.

Why can’t the nuclear waste be moved and transported right now?

We are working to revise an amendment to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 to ensure that consolidated storage locations are consent-based, undergo thorough environmental review, and are environmentally stable for the entire lifetime that waste is radioactive. We want to ensure that if an interim storage site becomes available, a permanent site is also being considered so that the interim site does not become a de facto permanent location.

Over 3 Million Pounds of high-level radioactive waste rests just 100 feet from a popular surf beach, 50 miles from the densely populated urban areas of San Diego and Los Angeles, and alongside the nation’s busiest transportation corridor.

Community Concerns

WHY CONSEQUENCES IN THE FUTURE REQUIRE ACTION NOW

The San Clemente community nearest to the waste is home to beach breaks and surf spots, such as the San Onofre State Beach and Trestles, that have made substantial impacts on the local community and surf culture at large. These are located yards from the power plant. Like these treasured sections of the coast, most, if not all, California beaches would be uninhabitable by humans for longer than we will exist as a result of a nuclear waste leak or accident.

Make Waves in Federal Policy

TAKE ACTION

With your support, we can provide a voice that is able to be heard at the federal level to remove nuclear waste off the California coast and into a consent-based permanent repository.

Sign the Petition

Support a federally approved, consent-based, and geologically secure permanent repository so nuclear waste can be moved off the California coastline.

Contact Us

The Surfrider Foundation
9883 Pacific Heights Blvd
San Diego, CA 92121
(619) 622-9661
info@surfrider.org