DOCKET
08-IEP-1F
DATE SEP 30 2008
RECD. OCT 01 2008

To: California Energy Commission

From: Shirley Vaine, REALTOR
San Diego Association of REALTORS Member for Life
San Diego County

Re: Docket number 07-AB-1632
08-IEP-1F
AB1632 Assessment

9/30/08

Dear Commissioners,

My concerns lie in the area of property values and how little knowledge a future homeowner may have on the high risk of living in a nuclear community. The absence of a mandate requiring the history of past nuclear accidents in the area and the difficulty in accessing information related to risk of nuclear hazards in the neighborhoods puts an unfair burden on the buyer.

Over the past 4 years I have been talking to local real estate boards and to the California Association of REALTORS® (CAR) regarding "Disclosures" that directly address the homes the buyers may consider acquiring that are within 45 minutes of nuclear reactor sites and storage for highly radioactive waste.

While reviewing the CEC Draft on Property Values, it appears the Commission cited surveys examples of decreased in values that experienced Tritium and other isotope leaks. This is valuable history that provides a starting point to understand economic impacts to home and business owners near reactors, waste sites and transport routes. Interviews of current owners that live near these sites are interesting, but not a valid measure of property value.

If the public was really aware of the dangers associated with mishaps, or meltdown that may cause economic and health impacts to thousands of victims near nuclear facilities, few would move there and property values in that neighborhood would be heavily devalued.

As a REALTOR®, I would suggest a new study of home buyers completely informed of the dangers of living in a shadow of a nuclear facilities and transport routes, ect, and home buyers who do not already live near these danger zones.
The bottom line question should be "Would you move your family into such a dangerous area if you had a choice?" I feel the market for said homes would be an extremely low along with the value of said properties. Very few if any would move there, or may not be able to get a loan if the truth be known.

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A real example is from a family I knew who was looking for a single level home in California 14 years ago found a new subdivision in Oceanside. The real estate agent handed them a document to sign that stated they had been alerted to the fact that the home was within the danger distance of San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station. They did not sign the document and dropped out of the deal immediately.
I recently went out into the community of Carlsbad and Oceanside asking escrow officers and real estate agents how do they disclose SONGS the Nuclear Power plant, they don't. There are no such disclosures being offered at this time.

In Simi Valley, California 1959 was a partial meltdown at Santa Susana Field Laboratory. The nuclear reactor spewed radiation over the surrounding communities in Ventura and Los Angeles Counties. Despite this disaster, there is a new subdivision being planned in the area where the radioactive buildings were scrapped.
I do not know the status of that project today, but will it be disclosed to the new buyers when the project is complete on what happened there? Will parents want to have their families live there? When buyers learn that researchers have detected higher cancer rates among people living within two miles of the Santa Susana Fields, does this effect real estate values?

Most people have no knowledge that there is "no homeowners insurance to protect home owners" in case of a Nuclear Hazard. Any nuclear reaction, radiation, radioactive contamination, or any consequence from a nuclear impact is excluded in the homeowners insurance.

Sellers of homes, businesses and California REALTORS® are by law supposed to disclose any material fact that may influence the buyer in the purchase of their home. Yet, "radioactive dangers or lack of property insurance protection is not disclosed. One CAR disclosure form is called a "Real Estate Transfer Disclosure Statement" (TDS14). Which ask the Seller, "are you aware of lead base paint, mold, flooding, golf balls, ect?". There is nothing in the disclosure regarding highly radioactive waste, spent fuel pools, transport routes to move radioactive waste through their neighborhoods, or radioactive releases everyday in our air, water, soil from near by nuclear reactors, submarines, or air craft carriers.

In Braidwood, Illinois, eleven families have filed a lawsuit against the utility for contamination from Tritium affecting their property. Radioactive contamination sites affected by Tritium have been found near Palo Verde in Arizona, Indian Point in New York, New Jersey and San Diego County to name a few.

The home buyer has a right to have "nuclear sources", spelled out, on what does this mean to their family and investment. In a nine page updated document from the CAR, called Statewide Buyer & Seller Advisory; paragraph 17 has about 80 words to let a buyer know that an "ERRANT GOLF BALL" may or may not damage the property or injure a person or pet. There is 120 word paragraph that discusses Neighborhood Noise.

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Environmental Hazards; paragraph 5 in the Statewide Buyer & Seller Advisory has only two words "Nuclear Sources" in a 240 word document of " hazards to consider" before purchasing a home. There should be a Nuclear Reactor paragraph that states "radioactive waste, may or may not stay on site, spent fuel pools are over crowded and may or may not over heat and cause a fire, Two very large holes are going to be cut into San Onofre Nuclear Power Plant for steam generator replacement and there is a risk involved.
The Families has a right to know, but they do not.
Maybe the Commissioners could make a recommendation for a mandatory statewide "Nuclear Reactor Disclosure" to inform new homebuyers of the risk of living near highly radioactive waste production, storage and proposed transport routes.

In New Mexico, another homeowner sued over the transport route that might haul nuclear waste by their home and cause loss of their property value and won $337,000.

For these few reasons, property values would likely decrease. California must fund & support sustainable and renewable energy sources without the risks and radioactive waste. The economic benefits of new jobs would boost the California economy.
Why do we have to live with decontamination centers and contaminated property?
Why should tax payers and ratepayers be saddled with hundreds of billions in subsidies to owners of nuclear plants to construct, operate, re-license and decommission and also be custodians for highly dangerous radioactive waste left to future generations.
Billions of dollars for13% of today's electricity, is the risk worth it?