



Frequently Asked Questions

Are there other chapters of Mothers for Peace in California, the other states, or in the world?

No. San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace is a local organization. In order to have legal standing to intervene in Diablo Canyon licensing decisions, the majority of its members must live within a 50 mile radius of the plant.

If you live beyond the 50 mile radius, you might consider becoming an Ambassador for Mothers for Peace. <http://mothersforpeace.org/Ambassadorupdate102010.pdf> We appreciate people working in other communities to educate others and raise funds for our legal intervention.

There are other groups with similar names like 'Another Mother for Peace' and 'Grandmothers for Peace' – but they have no affiliation to us.

How long has the Mothers for Peace been in existence?

The San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace came together in 1969. A young mother had written a letter to the editor of the local newspaper asking that people who shared her sadness and frustration at the needless loss of life in the Vietnam War join her in searching out ways to act effectively as a group. As the war wound down and MFP learned more about the nuclear plant being built nearby and the connections between nuclear waste and nuclear weapons, MFP turned our attention to the many issues raised by the Diablo Canyon reactors and waste storage facilities. The shared values and compelling need to act that originally brought the group together have continued to characterize the Mothers for Peace.

Do you have to be a mother to be a member?

No! Its members include mothers, grandmothers, and non-parents. Its membership is predominantly, but not exclusively, women. Men are welcome!

How many people are actively working in the group?

There are approximately 30 people working within the group and several thousand supporters.

How do I become a member?

If you are interested in becoming a member or a supporter of Mothers for Peace, go to the "Contact Us" page on this site <http://mothersforpeace.org/contact-info> and send us an email!

Is there any paid staff?

No. Mothers for Peace is an all-volunteer organization. We raise funds to pay for the services of our wonderful attorney, Diane Curran.

<http://mothersforpeace.org/DianeCurranbio10101.pdf>

We also pay expert witnesses for litigation purposes.

How long has the Mothers for Peace been involved with Diablo Canyon?

Since 1973, the Mothers for Peace has focused much of its attention on the local dangers involving Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant. It has been the legal intervenor for over three decades of controversy concerning the construction, licensing, and operation of the Diablo Canyon facility. The organization utilizes all legal means to ensure safe operation and compliance with State and Federal Laws.

What other kinds of activities is the Mothers for Peace involved in?

In addition to its 'watchdog' role of Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant and legal intervention, Mothers for Peace:

- works to educate its members and others using such means as forums, films, lectures, marches, rallies, vigils, and social media such as its website and Facebook page.
- awards yearly scholarships to high school seniors and college students whose career plans and community work demonstrate serious commitment to caring for the earth or promoting world peace.
- makes a yearly donation of a set of children's books promoting the cause of peace, social justice, and equality to the San Luis Obispo library system.

What are the problems with nuclear power in general and the Diablo Canyon plant in particular?

High level radioactive waste is the Achilles' heel of the nuclear industry. It remains toxic for 250,000 years, and there is no permanent storage solution. After years of controversy and despite the billions of dollars spent at Yucca Mountain in Nevada, the project has been abandoned. The waste is therefore stored onsite in open pools and dry casks which have been designed for temporary storage only.

The pools are tightly packed with a potential for a severe fire and catastrophic radiological release if partially drained due to terrorism, accident, or natural disaster (as we saw in Fukushima). These pools are vulnerable to sabotage, for there is no containment structure.

After a minimum of five years in the pools, the waste can be placed in dry casks. These casks are also vulnerable to sabotage and natural disaster.

Reprocessing the waste is not a viable option. In order to reprocess uranium and plutonium in power plants, spent fuel has to be treated to chemically separate these elements from other highly radioactive byproducts. As it chops and dissolves used fuel rods, a reprocessing plant releases about 15 thousand times more radioactivity into the environment than nuclear power reactors. *Reprocessing is not recycling; the most dangerous elements still require isolation.*

Nuclear reactors supply plutonium for nuclear weapons. Nuclear power plants typically produce a net of about 200 kilograms of plutonium per year for each 1,000 megawatts of electric power generating capacity. Diablo Canyon reactors have produced over 25,000 pounds of plutonium thus far.

Nuclear power is expensive. Conservative estimates range between \$6 and \$12 billion per reactor and is predicted to rise. It is also heavily subsidized by the Federal Government in loan guarantees for construction, funds for research and development, and the search for a solution to the problem of radioactive waste storage. Insurance in the event of a major disaster – the Price-Anderson Act – requires the nuclear industry to pay for only the first \$10 billion for deaths, injuries, and property. It is not possible to insure your personal property in the event of a radioactive release.

The Department of Homeland Security, the CIA, and the FBI have determined that nuclear facilities are targets of terrorists. Nuclear power plants were certainly not designed to withstand attacks by large airliners loaded with fuel, such as those that crashed into the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

Diablo Canyon is a particularly vulnerable target of terrorism because it is located on an exposed and unprotected portion of the California coast and is susceptible to airborne and waterborne assaults.

Diablo Canyon is located in a seismically active zone. There are multiple faults in the area – a minimum of 13. The recently discovered Shoreline Fault has not been thoroughly studied. It is located 300 meters from the intake structure and 600 meters from the power block. The Hosgri Fault is less than three miles offshore, and it may intersect with the Shoreline Fault. Analysis on these and other onshore faults that run close to the reactors have not been done.

Diablo Canyon is an old plant with aging components. It was designed in the 1960s. Construction began in the late 1960s and continued into the 70s and 80s. Diablo didn't begin operation until 1984. The plant was old before it began operation. It'll be over 60 years old at the end of the license renewal period in 2024 and 2025.

What kinds of litigation has the Mothers for Peace been involved in?

Mothers for Peace plays a unique role as intervenor in litigation involving licensing, seismic safety, high level radioactive waste storage, consequences of a terrorist attack, and – currently – opposition to PG&E's proposed 20-year license renewal for Diablo Canyon.

Don't we need the power from Diablo Canyon?

Civilization without nuclear power is possible. Wind, solar, bioenergy, and other sustainable sources of energy – coupled with energy efficiency and conservation – can meet our electricity needs. They are less expensive, clean, and readily available.

Visit the following website for detailed information:

http://www.ucsusa.org/global_warming/solutions/big_picture_solutions/climate-2030-blueprint.html

What about global climate change? Don't we need nuclear power to help solve that problem?

Without doubt, climate change is one of the most urgent threats of our time. But nuclear generation of electricity is not a reasonable solution, given the economic and environmental downsides and the risks of radioactive releases – whether caused by accident or by terrorist attack.

Mothers for Peace believes that better solutions exist to mitigate global warming.

For more detailed information, go to:

http://mothersforpeace.org/data/climate/at_download/file