

DIANE CURRAN – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH October 2010

Diane Curran is a partner in the law firm of Harmon, Curran, Spielberg, & Eisenberg, in Washington, D.C. Since 1981, Diane has represented citizen groups, state and local governments, and individuals in a wide range of licensing and enforcement cases relating to nuclear power plants, factories, and waste storage and disposal sites. A nationally recognized expert in the field of nuclear safety and security regulation, Diane has litigated the requirements of numerous public safety and environmental protection laws before the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and in the U.S. court system.

Diane was in law school when the Three Mile Island accident happened in 1979. While she was still a student she went to work for Harmon and Weiss, a public interest law firm that was involved in the Three Mile Island restart case. As soon as she graduated from law school, Diane began a ten-year battle against the licensing of the Seabrook nuclear power plant for the New England Coalition on Nuclear Pollution. She never left the firm.

In her thirty years as an environmental lawyer, Diane has raised safety and environmental concerns in many NRC cases. Her work contributed to the shutdown of the grossly contaminated Sequoyah Fuels uranium processing facility in Oklahoma, the NRC's denial of a permit for a uranium enrichment facility in Louisiana based on environmental justice grounds, and the imposition of decommissioning funding requirements on a proposed uranium mine.

In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, Diane's work has increasingly focused on security issues. She has found it increasingly difficult to advocate for rigorous federal regulation of nuclear licensees when so much information that previously was publicly available is now shrouded by secrecy. Several of Diane's current cases involve efforts to force the NRC to include the public in its decision-making processes about nuclear security issues, to disclose more information to the public, and to allow interested members of the public to participate in closed hearings where information is too sensitive to be disclosed publicly.

In 2006, on behalf of the San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace, Diane won a ground-breaking U.S. Court of Appeals decision requiring NRC to consider the environmental impacts of intentional attacks on a proposed spent fuel storage facility. After the case was sent back to the NRC, the agency did a very poor job of addressing the issues in an environmental assessment; thus, Diane and the Mothers for Peace are back in court. Diane is now preparing for an oral argument in San Francisco on November 4.