

FAITH LEADER SUBMISSIONS

1. Mthobisi Wellington Sibanda

Intern Minister / Faith Leader with Safcei.

Chairperson and Members of Committee. Lenten Greetings

I will be presenting with other colleagues, in the given time allocation.

In

We stand an ominous moment in the history of humanity where our survival as a species is dependent on our stewardship of the environment. This is where we have to acknowledge our failure as human being. We have not linked our faith with our day to day actions which lead to a consumerist culture, and more depletion of the earth's resources.

I open with the words of Cardinal Joseph Bernadin, when he once said, as his commencement address in 1983

"Because the nuclear issue is not simply political but also a profoundly moral and religious question, Faith Communities must be participant in the process of protecting the world and its people from the spectre of nuclear conversation".

For moral arguments to change the opinion of political decision- makers, we will require a concerted and sustained effort by communities of faith to educate about the immorality of Nuclear. We are here today to appeal to you as communalities of faith and to engage robustly on matters that affect all of us.

One factor that sociologists and other social scientists have not adequately researched is the concept of the local church or faith communities. The local church/Mosque/Temples are a persistent presence in most communities across the world. A community is incomplete without a church building or organization of one form of or the other. The significance of the local church in communities has to be researched and the results have to be used to shape how we deal with issues such as Nuclear Energy because it Involves People.

SAFCEI and ELA believe that the billions that nuclear energy would cost (conservative estimates are around R330-billion), would be better spent to address basic household electrification, community-owned renewable energy sources, housing, social grants and now, procurement of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Countries of the South have lived under the shadow of a permanent economic crisis. These are serious ethical and moral issues that we need to tackle with more determination than we have done thus far.

I quote also Makoma From earthlife

“there is no safe, permanent solution for dealing with the high-level radioactive waste (HLRW) created. At Koeberg Nuclear Power Plant, for instance, all HLRW is stored in temporary cooling pools on-site. And, as this toxic waste increases every year, so too do the number of people living in communities in close proximity to the plant, who will be exposed should there be an accident.”

John 10:10 Speaks of fullness of life for all creation. "I have come so that all may have life and have it in abundance

2. Celeste Esau, Cape Town Unitarians

Good day

I am Celeste Esau from the Cape Town Unitarians.

We are a spiritual community that is founded on the universal truths found in most religions. One of our main principles is to respect the interdependent Web of all existence of which we are a part... Drawing on the spiritual teachings of Earth centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

To this end we regularly exercise our democratic responsibility to engage with government regarding issues affecting our faith communities. One of the issues we strongly support is to sound the alarm over the climate crisis.

Decisions made today must not perpetuate an outdated economic system that relies on fossil fuels and the destruction of the very forests, waters, oceans and soils that make life possible.

We are calling for serious action now. To get serious about investing in clean renewable energy which would create more jobs and security instead of nuclear energy provision which will waste more public funds and create more high level radioactive waste.

Our religions envision a world transformed, in which humanity in all it's diversity has developed a shared reverence for life on Earth, in which the

era of conquest, extraction and exploitation has given way to cooperation and community.

A better world is possible by coming together in faith and solidarity.

Thank you

3. Cecil Plaatjies, Lay Nichiren Buddhist

Buddhism promotes respect for the dignity of life.

The Buddha said: "Do not hurt sentient beings. Also do not kill. And do not allow others to kill sentient beings."

Joanna Macy, a Buddhist and anti-nuclear activist said: "Each generation shall endeavor to preserve the foundation of life and well-being for those who come after. To produce substances that damage following generations is morally unacceptable. Given the extreme toxicity and longevity of radioactive materials, their production must cease. The development of safe, renewable energy sources and non-violent means of conflict resolution is essential to the health and survival of life on Earth. Radioactive materials are not to be regarded as an economic or military resource."

From a Buddhist perspective I conclude that the use of nuclear power and the sustainability of life are incompatible.

4. Andre Naidoo, Khoi Traditional

!Gaitses Blessed Greetings in one of the oldest indigenous languages Khoi Khoi Gowab.

Our mountains, oceans and habitation of this Southern part of the continent has existed for eons. For thousands of years, indigenous ways and indigenous knowledge systems survived and thrived, so much so that arrivers on this land though of our country as a paradise. Unique flora and fauna were plentiful.

Progress and demands for power, electricity and data have put a huge strain on these national resources and the social fabric.

For the first time in our history, we believe, we have the opportunity to press the PAUSE button and evaluate various options for the benefit of all, regardless of race or colour barriers.

We can continue on a path of progress and power with little regard for the future generations – and/or we can re-look at, reinvestigate and reimagine the world with IKS sensitivities eg solar and wind. Renewable Energy has progressed to the point that we may want to invest more and

more into research and projects that align themselves with this trend to "go green", projects that are sustainable and environmentally safer.

As a faith leader committed to the indigenous knowledge ways that are being re-discovered, we fully support research and projects to re-examine how to introduce and progress with alternate energy production.

Gangaans! Thank you.

5. . Andy Pienaar

The community of Komaggas has learnt with great concern and utmost disappointment about Nersa's decision to grant permission to Eskom to add 2500mw more nuclear power to the electricity grid.

The Komaggas community which is already encroached by sanctimonious mines and serious government neglect is not an external, far off location of energy illiterate people even though the actions of people high suggest such.

We regret the lack of transparency shown in this process as we have not seen or heard of any new research done in our area so this whole process must be a product of desktop research.

We base our opposition to this licence on the following.

1 that our land is sacred to us and that we do not wish to sacrifice the future well-being of our children for a few jobs, infrastructure that is taboo to us and a fleeting moment in the limelight.

2 we see no economic sustainability for us in nuclear as it stands as it will turn our area in an economic wasteland. How can South Africa afford nuclear versus the cost effective wind and solar energy? We believe that this decision is undemocratic as there are so much more that can be done to increase social upliftment

With so much more on our minds we have to close as the process in another undemocratic move allows us little time to speak our minds.

Regards

Andy W Pienaar
Kobush Development Association

6. Rev Dr Mark Marais, Rector, St James Church GRT

In John 3: 16-17 we are charged by Jesus with a duty to be guardians and stewards of the Earth and assist to stem the misuse of its resources, encouraging alternatives to be found, wherever possible and to use our intellectual gifts to do so. The safety and sustainability of our environment and population are inseparable, and must be our priority. Renewable energy is safer, cheaper, more sustainable and quicker to build.

Keeping Koeberg power station going beyond its sell by date has a knock-on effect beyond the vulnerable communities around Koeberg, because it re-opens the extraction of uranium in the Karoo further compromising that area and the communities who live there.

There is currently no permanent solution or safe disposal method for the high level waste being stored on site. We are harming the Earth by creating more waste, and this will last forever. Apart from the exorbitant cost of nuclear build, the ongoing costs of dealing with the waste will continue to make electricity increasingly more expensive. The costs will be passed on to the consumer and once again, the already vulnerable suffer the most. Electricity is not meant to be an elitist commodity; it is meant for everybody.

We do have renewable alternatives, please use these life-affirming options. As a Minister I know that every faith has care of the earth as a foundational concept. Nuclear build flies directly in the face of our sacred directives.