

NUCLEAR POWER

We recognize the increasing demand for electric power; nevertheless, a proposed nuclear power plant in Central Wisconsin poses serious questions concerning health and safety. In order to protect the quality of life, we support:

1. Stricter regulation and development of better techniques to reduce radioactive releases during transportation, reprocessing and particularly, long-term storage.
2. A permit system, which includes the opportunity for participation by all levels of government and the public for the siting, construction, and operation of power plants.
3. Consideration of ways to limit consumption of electricity such as consumer education, reduced advertising restructured rates and other means.

We participated in a 1969 Lake Michigan Inter-League study to determine the effects of power plants on the water quality of Lake Michigan. In 1971 the state board approved the results of that consensus in a 13-item position statement that included more stringent standards for thermal and radioactive effluent, stricter regulation, development of better techniques to reduce radioactive releases during transportation, reprocessing and long-term storage and opposition to once-through cooling.

Announcement in January 1973 that Rudolph in Wood County was a proposed site for a nuclear power plant spurred informational meetings both pro and con. Stevens Point and Wisconsin Rapids Leagues were invited to send representatives to a meeting of women residents of farms in the area where excavations by utilities were already taking place. We heard a visitor from Vermont tell of her experience as an intervener in hearings regarding the operation of the Yankee nuclear power plant and received a packet of information given to Rudolph residents who toured the Point Beach nuclear facility courtesy of Wisconsin utilities. A series of four open meetings in Rudolph featured leading opponents, proponents, representatives of the Atomic Energy Commission and Environmental Protection Agency, and officials of state government. A succession of meetings followed in 1973 and 1974 sponsored by utilities, LAND (League Against Nuclear Dangers) and groups at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

The Wisconsin Rapids League undertook a study of nuclear energy and produced a publication, Plug In: Answers to Your Questions About Nuclear Energy, in September 1973. Since nuclear power is an issue extending beyond the boundaries of a local league, LWV policy required that the Wisconsin Rapids League confer with the state board and inform other area League of their study, consensus and possibility of action.

The State Board advised that League could be most effective by asking pertinent questions in a delaying action. Another consideration was that LWV is a multi-issue organization concerned with jobs and energy, as well as the environment.

Our general meeting in September 1973 was devoted to nuclear energy. A film, "How Safe are American Atomic Reactors?" was shown: state EQ chair Cora Stencil was the main speaker, and Wisconsin Rapids LWV representatives told about their study and asked for our cooperation. In November 1973 our board voted "not to object" to the Rapids consensus and/or action and scheduled April '74 unit meetings for discussion/study of their publication and possible concurrence with their position. At the second of these unit meetings our members concurred with the seven items of the Rapids consensus.

In 1975 the state board voted to seek member agreement on a broader basis than the water quality agreement of 1971. The March FORWARD was devoted to energy. The resulting member agreement was concurrence with the following; The LWV-Wisconsin opposes licensing and construction of nuclear fission reactors until scientific questions regarding their effects upon public health and safety can be resolved. The interpretation of the wording "opposes further licensing and construction" does not mean opposition to plants now licensed and/or under construction; "nuclear fission reactors" means only that -- it does not mean we oppose all future use of nuclear power.

At the annual meeting in April 1978 members voted to delete four items of the original concurrence with the Wisconsin Rapids LWV, which involved action on the national rather than local level.