CBG NEEDS YOUR HELP

FOR ALMOST 5 DECADES, CBG has worked against great odds on behalf of peace and the environment. Many victories have been won, but each accomplishment has been met with enormous push-back from powerful forces – especially now. Looking forward to the coming years, it became clear that one of CBG’s greatest challenges was to help train a new generation of well-prepared environmental and social justice advocates. To that end, CBG and Dan Hirsch have committed to developing a program for student interns as well as placing new hired staff members in the workplaces of tomorrow. Programs like this, crucial to the future health of our planet, are a worthwhile investment. But they cost money and CBG needs your donations and support, particularly in this very dangerous time.

Please make a tax-deductible donation today using the enclosed envelope. Or donate online by going to our website www.committeetobridgethegap.org

Click on the DONATE button and use a major credit card or Paypal to complete your donation.

COMMITTEE TO BRIDGE THE GAP
PO Box 4
Ben Lomond, CA 95005

address service requested

COMMITTEE TO BRIDGE THE GAP
PO Box 4
Ben Lomond, CA 95005-0004
(831) 336-8003
www.committeetobridgethegap.org

Daniel Hirsch, President
Catherine Lincoln, Executive Coordinator, Newsletter Editor
Devyn Gortner, Research Associate
María Cañe, Research Associate
Michael Rincon, Policy Analyst
Taylor Altenbern, Roxanna Diaz, Blake Pfister, Interns
Anthony Zepeda, Webmaster
Joel Hirsch, Nuclear Terrorism Project
Laura Gigos, Bookkeeper
Megan Garrett, Newsletter & Graphic Design

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Printed using 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper created with wind power.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Winter 2017 Newsletter
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SANTA SUSANA
CLEANUP IN DANGER

by CBG President Dan Hirsch

SEVENTY YEARS AGO, a facility for testing nuclear reactors and rockets too dangerous to be conducted near populated areas was established on the boundary of Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. Since then, the population has mushroomed, with half a million people now living within ten miles. In 1979, Bridge the Gap brought to public attention a partial nuclear meltdown that had occurred at that Santa Susana Field Laboratory in 1958 but had been kept secret for decades. At least three other reactors suffered accidents there as well, along with numerous radioactive fires, spills, and releases. Tens of thousands of rocket tests added to the widespread nuclear and toxic chemical contamination burdening the site, some of which migrates offsite. Government-funded studies found contaminants had migrated offsite in excess of EPA levels of concern, and a greater than 60% increase in incidence of key cancers associated with proximity to the site.

In 2010, Bridge the Gap was instrumental in getting legally binding agreements for full cleanup of the contamination, to be completed by 2017. As we approach the end of 2017, however, the cleanup not only hasn’t been begun. The parties responsible for the pollution – the Department of Energy (DOE), NASA, and Boeing – and the regulatory agency, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) have all dragged their feet. And now they are trying to break out of the cleanup commitments and leave virtually all of the contamination not cleaned up.

This would put at continued risk the people living nearby. In January, DOE released its draft Environmental Impact Statement for the cleanup. Every option proposed would breach the cleanup agreement it had signed in 2010. Rather than cleaning up all the contamination, as promised, DOE proposed to leave in place as much as 99%. Thousands of people submitted comments in protest. The Los Angeles City Council and the Los Angeles and Ventura County Boards of Supervisors passed resolutions in opposition. The Los Angeles City Attorney, Bridge the Gap, and the Natural Resources Defense Council submitted a candle-light vigil, led by local families of children with cancer, was held in March to stress the need for full cleanup at SSFL. Photo: Parents vs SSFL

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SANTA SUSANA - CONTINUED

Environmental Impact
DTSC had made to a full DOE when it tried to walk away from cleanup obligations, and the court retains jurisdiction. Now, we may have to return to the court to stop DOE all over again.

In September, DTSC released its draft Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR). It too breaches virtually every commitment DTSC had made to a full and protective cleanup. The comments DTSC signed "leave in place" alternatives. Now, however, in the EIR, it proposes to leave in place, yet cleaned up, vast amount of contamination. Once again, CBG is spearheading public resistance to these broken promises.

The fight is really pretty simple: on the one hand, the power of the parties responsible for the pollution, particularly Boeing, and their captured regulatory agencies, and on the other hand, the innocent victims of the contamination for which they are responsible and the obligation to clean it up which they are attempting to evade.

Recently, a group of families with children with rare pediatric cancers has become deeply and movingly involved in the fight for cleanup. Many met in the halls of Children's Hospital's oncology ward. Most lived in neighborhoods within ten miles of SSFL and became convinced that Santa Susana may have caused some of the cancers. One of the children, 7-year-old Grace, first diagnosed in 2014, had gone into remis-
sion after months of grueling chemo. This summer, the cancer returned, and she is back in Children's Hospital, valiantly undergoing more chemo and a bone marrow transplant. This is all a fight between corporate greed and corrupt agencies on the one hand and the Graces of the world on the other. And Grace has taught us, among so many other things, that we can't ever give up.

MEET THE STAFF
CBG's POLICY ANALYST & 2017 STUDENT INTERNS

Rosanna Diaz: From Riverside, California, I am a third-year student intern at UCSC pursuing a major in both environmental anthropology and sustainability. I am interested in the integration of sustainable work combining policy, economics and the environment for about half a million years, a period longer than our existence as a species. Our government has existed for a mere 230 years. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has been around for about 40 years. This is a matter of intergenerational ethics: we got 70 years of power, they get 500,000 years of waste.

Blake Pfister: I am from Southern California, about an hour drive south of Los Angeles. I became interested in environmental studies after taking AP Environmental Science in high school. Now I am a senior undergraduate majoring in Environmental Science and Economics. I am interested in the integration of both fields, as they are inseparable in the real world. As invaluable as most service work internships I have done in the past have been, I wanted experience focusing on other kinds of sustainable work combining policy, economics and the environment. Committee to Bridge the Gap allows me to see where my passions can lead.

Taylor Altenbern: I am a third-year at UCSC, studying Anthropology and Sustainability. I am from San Diego, California and grew up passionate about environmental issues. I was first introduced to Dan about a year ago, when I took his course “The Making and Changing of Environmental Policy.” I now continue to work with him and the Committee to Bridge the Gap as an intern on nuclear policy projects such as Hunters Point Naval Shipyard and Santa Susana Field Laboratory. Dan’s was a class unlike any other I had taken at UCSC because rather than just informing me of the immensity of problems we face as a society, it taught me solutions. I entered the class frightened of and intimidated by any sort of policy work and left feeling like I had the tools to create change. That’s why I still work with Dan and the CBG team. It is empowering to have the knowledge base and skill set to create the kind of change I wish to see in the world.

Blake Pfister

SAN ONOFRE UPDATE

On December 2, 1942, the first high level nuclear waste in the world was created. Three quarters of a century later there is still no permanent repository for such waste. We created immensely dangerous stuff with no thought as to how to safely dispose of it.

Irradiated nuclear fuel is among the most toxic materi-
als on earth. The waste has to be isolated from the human environment for about half a million years, a period longer than our existence as a species. Our government has existed for a mere 230 years. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has been around for about 40 years. This is a matter of intergenerational ethics: we got 70 years of power, they get 500,000 years of waste.

This issue has arisen near San Onofre, the nuclear plant that CBG played an instrumental role in clos-
ing. It may not be operating any more, but the waste remains there, and Southern California Edison intends to bury the waste on the beach. A dum
er idea is hard to imagine. Many in the area understandably want to stop the waste out of Southern California, now, no matter what. CBG has been trying to play a constructive role in helping the community push for a safer alternative than what Edison is proposing, while not forcing the waste onto other communities, transferring the risk to them.

A permanent national repository that has the least chance possible of leakage must be established. In the meantime, the first rule is “do no harm.” The second is to not do unto others what you don’t wish to be done to oneself. Production of radioactive waste was a terrible sin; we should make no more of it, and beg forgiveness of future generations.

RADIATION PROTECTION STANDARDS WEAKENED

CBG and PEER to FILE SUIT

EARLIER THIS YEAR, DESPITE YEARS OF EFFORTS by Bridge the Gap, EPA issued new Protective Action Guides (PAGs) which dramatically weaken protection of the public from exposure to radiation. The PAGs allow the public to drink water contaminated with radioactivity at levels thousands of times higher than the Safe Drinking Water Act permits, without any action taken to protect them from such exposures.

The PAGs also would allow long-term contamination of areas so high (the equivalent of thousands of chest X-rays a year) that EPA’s own official estimates are that every fourth person would get a cancer from the radiation, without there being any requirement for cleanup to protect people from such huge doses. The PAGs apply not merely to catastrophic such exposures.

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