

Cohalan Betrayed Us

I awoke this morning to the dreaded, but not totally unexpected, sad news that Peter Cohalan had betrayed the people of Suffolk County.

My mind raced back over the different periods of association with Cohalan, and conversations I had had with him and his associates. None of me so blind as those who do not want to see.

When I first pushed Cohalan for county executive, some associates of his in Islip warned me that he was a snake, he had no backbone, no courage. He would flip on a dime if it was to his own advantage, they warned.

Cohalan himself told me that his father, former Judge John P. Cohalan, did not want him to run for county executive. He never gave me the reason, just the statement. Did his father know something then that we know now?

During the primary, a deal was cut that would have made Ernie Signorelli the county Republican leader. Pete was part of it. His word was his bond. When it came time for Pete to stand up, Pete went on vacation. Ernie remained a judge with the promise from Cohalan that if Ernie wanted to run for Congress, he would have Cohalan's backing. Cohalan backed Jack Hart. This promise was broken with a shrug of his shoulder and the comment, "Jack and I have been friends for a long time."

Cohalan asked an old schoolmate of his, a gentleman to the nth degree, to give up his lucrative law practice and come to work as his county attorney. He needed good men who were super intelligent, honest and whom he could trust. Six months before David Gilmartin ever had an idea he was not going to be continued on as county attorney, Cohalan had made up his mind to get rid of Gilmartin. His comment at the time was he (Gilmartin) "has had his run; it's time to give someone else a

chance." So much for loyalty and trust.

Tony Prudenti, the former county Republican leader, gave up his contracting business and virtually devoted four years of his life to protecting Peter politically. Yet when it came down to a leadership fight, Cohalan took another powder, leaving his loyal friend out on a limb with the wolves nipping at his feet.

Midway through Cohalan's first term, he decided that he was gubernatorial material. Although there were many who disagreed with him because of his lackluster performance, he barged ahead with a campaign to become the governor of the State of New York. Early on it became apparent that Lew Lehrman would be the standard bearer, but there was a good possibility that Cohalan would be selected as lieutenant governor. Cohalan was a suburban county executive, Irish and a Catholic. Lehrman was Jewish and urban, the perfectly balanced ticket. Cohalan went to New York confidently expecting the designation. The way we get the story, an envelope arrived at the Lehrman headquarters that allegedly concerned Cohalan. When the Lehrman forces confronted the Cohalan supporters with the information, according to one of Cohalan's lieutenants, Cohalan went to bed. Cohalan maintains that he had the flu and a high fever and this was the reason he was bedridden. We have never been privy as to the actual contents of the envelope, but it has always made us wonder why Cohalan, a real political fighter, could not muster the strength to go to the floor with his campaign. After this episode in Cohalan's political career, we noted a big change in him and a change in the people he surrounded himself with.

Cohalan had emphatically pledged his word, bond and honor to the people of Suffolk County on the matter of Shoreham. He was firmly in

their corner. He was opposed to the opening of Shoreham. He would fight with all his forces and facilities to block the plant from opening. There was no vacillation or room for compromise in his stand. There was a pledge, a promise from an elected official to those he represented and wanted to represent. He asked to be their leader, vowing to work on their behalf. They believe him, and they elected him.

Nothing has changed! The plant was still built in the wrong place. The design and construction is still faulty. There is less chance today for safe evacuation. The roads are no shorter or wider, and there are more cars on our highways. The population of central and eastern Long Island has increased, not decreased. There is no logical reason to change one's position based on safety.

Why did Cohalan do it... betray the people of Suffolk County? Was it cowardliness, greed, corruption, blackmail or just the backbone of a chocolate éclair?

Two weeks ago Thursday I met with Cohalan. I still considered him a friend, a decent human being, a man of conviction who would not betray the people he was constitutionally obligated to represent. He acknowledged the safety issues surrounding Shoreham have not changed, but only the financial consequences have.

My Apologies

Jesus Christ had his Judas. The founders of the American Revolution had their Aaron Burr. The residents of Suffolk County have Peter Cohalan. Times change, but traitors and cowards don't.

To the readers of Suffolk Life, I offer my apologies. I blindly placed faith in Peter Cohalan. I was partially responsible for his becoming county executive. I told you of my belief and my trust in this person. Right up to the end I was convinced that when all the chips were down, he would act like a man. I was wrong and I apologize.

Cohalan may have changed his colors, but the facts concerning our safety relating to Shoreham have not. The plant was built in the wrong location, the design was questionable, the construction abominable and evacuation impossible. Cohalan knows this, the federal government knows this, the Board of Directors of LILCO know this, yet, they are willing to trade our lives for the financial salvation of the corporation.

The fight for the safety of the people has taken a tremendous blow. We are not down, we are not out, we won't sell out and we won't quit. Life is too precious. We can hope and pray

Cohalan sold out, but the fight is not over. Judas sold Christ out for a pittance of silver, but His message remained and still remains 2000 years after this traitorous behavior. Ironically, that's about how long it will take to clean up the mess if and when Shoreham has an accident and the Island is left a wasteland, Cohalan's graveyard.

Cohalan has affected my life drastically for I fear I never will be able to trust another man again. Forewarned I was, but my blind loyalty did not allow me to see. That loyalty has been replaced with a pity for Cohalan, for all the years that he has remaining he will look in the mirror and see his true soul and self. Not a pleasant sight even for a man with a strong stomach.

Cohalan has one out that could make him a hero instead of a chump. LILCO has paid the back taxes they were blackmailing the county with. When the checks have cleared, and our money is safely in the bank, Cohalan could announce this was only a ruse to get our money from LILCO. He could say: "The safety issue has not changed. Shoreham is not safe, and evacuation is not possible. We had to use this ploy to get our money. When you are dealing with blackmail, all is fair."

He could do it, but is Cohalan that smart? We doubt it.

And why not?

and actively lobby the County Legislature and hope that they have courage that the county executive has shown he has lost. They can continue the fight. Some have already pledged to do so.

We can send an outpouring of support to Governor Mario Cuomo asking him to take up our banner. Cuomo has publicly said that he believes the circumstances surrounding Shoreham mitigate against its opening. Cuomo is a person who has shown compassion for people, strong integrity and the ability to stand up to corporate giants. He is not willy nilly and does not flip flop because of polls and political pressures. We know Cuomo will want to hear from you.

Write to him. In the mean time, be as active as you can in speaking to your friends and neighbors. Ask them to communicate with the county executive telling him of your dismay, and with the governor pleading for his support.

All the wrong reasons in the world will not make it right to open Shoreham and allow us and our children to be condemned to possible devastation in the future.

And why not?

SUFFOLK LIFE

Vol. 24 No. 38

NEWSPAPERS and Suffolk County Life

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NEW LOCATION AND PHONE NUMBERS

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Main & General
Office
369-0800

News
Office
369-0810

Classified
Office
369-0820

Had Enough? Do Something

The wave of emotion that has been created by County Executive Peter F. Cohalan's betrayal of his word to the public has been staggering. Calls to our office, voices trembling with frustration, seek a method of response. "What can we do?... What can we do to get rid of this man who so callously put out the public's safety?... How can we stop this man from endangering our future, and that of our children, with a plant he, himself, declared so many times was unsafe?... How can we stop him from permitting a fake evacuation test that will prove nothing?" Those are some of the questions posed by angry people.

Here are some suggestions for those who want to know what they can do to prevent Cohalan from selling out the safety of the public:

If you have had enough. If you want to slam your hand down on the table and scream: "I've had it with this nonsense. I've had it with politicians who say one thing and then do another. I've had it with this whole Shoreham fiasco, with having to endure skyrocketing electric bills in the future to pay for an unsafe plant," pick up the phone.

Don't bother calling Cohalan. He's thrown away a perfect opportunity to be a hero for the people. Cohalan could have waited for LILCO's belated check for \$130 million in back taxes to clear the bank and told the utility "I gotcha!" The payment of the back taxes wiped out the county's fiscal crisis. Thus there was no further reason to support the opening of the plant, as Cohalan has done. He wiped out the opportunity to be a hero when he sent the county attorney before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to inform them the "county" now supports participation in an evacuation drill. The result of that action will be enormous. The NRC has been looking for any excuse to put the plant on line, and Cohalan has given it to them. The NRC will grant the low license request, and then Cohalan and others of his ilk will proclaim that now the fuel is activated and contaminated, we must plan for an emergency evacu-

ation. And now that it will cost so much to decommission the plant, we might as well use it and endure the threat to our future.

Cohalan, on February 16, 1983, said: "Simply put, it is the nature of the Shoreham plant and where it is located that would prevent the public from being able to take effective protective actions in the event of a serious Shoreham accident. Effective radiological emergency preparedness for such an accident can never exist in Suffolk County--no matter who prepares or implements the plan."

He said more: "...we must not put into place a 'paper plan'--a sugar coated package of platitudes which serve LILCO's self-interest. That would only lull the public into believing that they are protected when they in fact are not... To those who argue that a serious nuclear accident at Shoreham is a remote possibility, I can only ask whether they would have us spin a wheel of fortune and look the other way. Government officials who have sworn to protect the public safety do not have the luxury of treating emergency preparedness and the public's safety as a casino game."

That's what Cohalan once said. Now he says the plant is safer, and will participate in an evacuation test, with the same sugar coated "paper plan" he once denounced. But nothing has changed. Only Cohalan's position. He is now prepared to spin that wheel of fortune and look the other way.

Don't bother with Cohalan. He is to be pitied. He has brought shame to his name. If it were not for the fact that this state has no provisions for a recall vote, petitions would have already been printed and distributed. If he receives a federal appointment in the near future, as has been strongly rumored, we must all insist he be charged with bribe taking--for selling out the public's safety in return for personal gain.

Instead, you should pick up your phone and call your county legislator. Ask if he or she intends to fight against Cohalan's actions. If he or she is a partner in the litigation to put aside

Cohalan's executive order. If he or she intends to do everything in their power to prevent Cohalan from selling out the public's best interest. Let the legislator know you are watching very carefully, and intend to vote in November accordingly.

Make no mistake about it, the legislators and the governor are receiving phone calls from those who are concerned only about LILCO and its fiscal condition. LILCO has had its employees making calls to the legislators in an effort to convince them to join with Cohalan in this sellout. Members of the pro-Shoreham group, which is being financed by LILCO, banks involved with LILCO and the nuclear industry, are making such calls as well. At a Republican caucus held the day Cohalan's retreat was made known, some legislators decided to sit back and wait to see what the public's reaction would be. Let them know how you feel. It's the very least you can do to protect you and your family from the possibility of an accident at Shoreham, and the need to flee for your safety.

If your legislator is one of those who is actively involved in fighting Cohalan, who is standing firm on the side of public safety, let him or her know you appreciate that concern and applaud them for such actions. Articles in this newspaper will keep you abreast of where your legislator stands on the issue.

Make that call today. Have other members of the family do the same. Tell your friends and neighbors to call. Let's create a groundswell of response. Let's show politicians the ilk of Cohalan that we have had enough of their nonsense, that we're not going to take it any more! It's important, it could be the most important phone call you will ever make.

But don't stop there! Call the governor's office. The local number is 360-6579. Tell the governor's office that you appreciate his firm stand on the issue, you applaud his sincere regard for the public. Plead with him to hang

tough. No matter how hard the going is. That you are behind him and will never forget his concern for the people.

Now, if you are a Republican, and you really want to become involved and take an active part in your own future, you should make a couple of more calls: Call your local Republican leader, your committeeman if you know who that is. Tell them you are tired of politicians who break their promises to the people. That Cohalan's actions are more than a broken campaign promise. They represent a betrayal of the public trust. That you are finished with Cohalan and anyone associated with him. Call the county leader and deliver the same message.

Remind them that they put Cohalan before the people as the Republican candidate, a candidate who vowed to the people he would never sacrifice their safety for LILCO's gain. Tell them if they don't repudiate the actions of this man, they are no better and you will never again have trust in what they or their party say. They have gained political power--which most have used to get county jobs and good salaries--because you, the rank and file, have believed in them. You registered that belief with your votes. Without you, they would not have the political power, and perhaps not the jobs, and the very least they owe you is the truth. And a concern for your future.

Elsewhere on this page you will find the numbers to call. You have asked us what you can do, and we offer these suggestions as a start. The rest is up to you. If you make the calls as suggested, applauding those who continue the fight and caution those who don't, there's a chance we can overcome the disgraceful political actions that have transpired.

If you don't, you have no right to expect anything but the trail of broken promises Cohalan has left behind in his journey of treacherous action.

And why not?

If Not Now, When?

Suffolk Life Editorial: October 1984
Warren Anderson, the Senate Majority Leader, a Republican, during this past session (1984) in Albany refused to address any energy bill. The energy problems throughout New York State are probably the most critical of any, outside of the budget, facing state government. This was a travesty of government. ... The Senate operates as a dictatorship. The majority members, who happen to be Republicans, select a leader. That leader has the ability to let out of committee or bottle up any bill or measure he chooses. Nothing gets to the floor, nothing gets discussed or debated without his approval. ... Our Long Island Republican senators have, in the past, unanimously elected Warren Anderson their leader. In doing so, they have abdicated their responsibility, for they have selected a man who has refused to face the problems and the dilemmas germane to Long Island. Our Long Island senators have failed to act as a bloc, and they are to be faulted for this lack of leadership.

Time has passed, but nothing has changed since those words were written last October. Warren Anderson continues to dictate the actions of the state

Senate. He continues to hold hostage any bill he doesn't want passed. He has held hostage the entire energy package put forth by Governor Mario Cuomo, a package designed to meet the energy needs of our future in such a way that would free us from the dictates of the utilities, and our local Senate representatives still fail to muster the fighting spirit and courage to speak out against this dictatorship. Because they have not become part of the solution, they are now a part of the problem.

Governor Cuomo, in a letter to Anderson dated May 27, urged Anderson's cooperation in acting on the energy agenda he submitted last year and resubmitted this session. He addressed Anderson's refusal to cooperate with these words: "You have stated repeatedly in the past that before you would assert your leadership to move any piece of this agenda, you first wanted to see the fate of the Shoreham plant resolved in the manner desired by the Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO)."

He added: "Warren, I hope we can break the log jam. All it needs is your leadership in the Senate. I am convinced that the safety of the people of Long Island requires me to insist on an adequate evacuation plan before Shoreham

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We Need Recall

In many states voters have the mechanism of recall when their elected leaders perform acts that they do not approve of. This mechanism is not often used, but is a safeguard against elected officials who determine that they have become and are above the people.

When Peter Cohalan announced his betrayal of his constituents over Shoreham, our phones rang off the hook. The message was the same, "we voted for this man because of his pledge to us, he sold us out, is there anything we can do to change his decision or the man?" Many callers referred to the impeachment of Richard Nixon. "Can't we do the same to the County Executive?" As much as we would like to have answered yes, and lead the movement, the answer was no.

Under Suffolk County's Charter we do not have an impeachment mechanism. We do have a local law which gives us the right of Initiative and Referendum. Through this law we may be able

to develop another law that would give the voters the right to establish a recall mechanism. We say maybe, we are not sure at this time if it would need state approval. We have asked some attorneys to look into the possibility of establishing a recall mechanism here in Suffolk County and on a state-wide basis.

It would certainly make sense, good government and good politics, we must have a check on the wanton disregard by politicians who forget that they are elected and set themselves up as dictators. It's ironic that the traitorous behavior of Peter Cohalan should be the mechanism that brings us to this need for such action, for he was the man who stood so proudly by the statement that good politics makes good government.

We have seen what the ilk of Cohalan can do both to good politics and to good government, and we need a mechanism to protect us from his kind of shame.

And why not?

December 31. Then he would become a full time employee of the Reagan administration.

This is the same man who argued vehemently in our office that being a County Legislator was a full-time job requiring 60 to 80 hours per week. Using his own statement, we wonder how he is going to be able to continue his part-time job as a full-time legislator and find time to be a part-time \$200 per day consultant to the federal government. As we now see, John Rosso has many tricks up his sleeve and mystical-

ly he will create another eight hours in the 24 hour day in service of his country. What price a man's soul has!

The Reagan administration has bought a member of the Suffolk County Legislature. The people have lost their representative. Smiling John will get rich through the taxation of little people who he once pledged himself to represent. Like Cohalan it's good to see John's true colors, where double talk can't save him.

And why not?

Another Rip-Off

We received a call today from the association of the Suffolk County District Detectives. Hat in hand they were begging for an ad in the yearbook so that the poor, underpaid detectives and police assigned to the District Attorney's agency's health and welfare would be enhanced. Come on guys, this is just another plain rip-off.

Most of the detectives and police assigned to the Suffolk County District Attorney's office have compensation packages that exceed \$40,000 per year, many exceed \$60,000. In addition they have one of the most lucrative health plans available in America. Their

pension plans are the envy of just about every worker.

They are not exactly what you call the poor kids on the block. They are not a benevolent association whose sole interest is outside charity. Isn't this kind of scam an insult to their integrity and professionalism?

Leave the charity solicitation to real charity and we say to the district attorney's association instead of sticking your hand out, out of habit, reach into your pocket and share some of your wealth with those who need it.

Charity we believe in, greed we find offensive.

And why not?

First Pay Off

One of the first legislators, outside of Lou Howard, to waver on Shoreham was John Rosso. When he first let the people down, we took him to task. He came into our office and said he did this because he had a better way. We said, John, prove it. He said, give me time. Time has passed, and we have seen no brilliance or genius coming from the Rosso headquarters. Just plain double talk, political trade-offs and the feathering of one's own nest.

Rosso compounded his first error by going back on his second pledge of never requiring the

residents of his district to pay a sales or real estate tax to bail out the political corruption of the South West Sewer District. When he cast his critical vote we felt then something had been offered, something big.

Last week it was announced that Rosso had been appointed to the Reagan administration. The poor boy from Mastic was to receive \$200 per day as a consultant to the Housing and Urban Development Agency. He would continue as a \$200 per diem employee until his full term had been served as County Legislator, next

Letters to the Editor

"Play a pretend, make-believe game"

Dear Mr. Cohalan,

Overlooking some other prime considerations, I voted for you in the last election solely based on your solidly verbalized opposition to the opening of LILCO's Shoreham Nuclear Plant.

I am not an opponent of nuclear energy, per se. I oppose, however, a plant which has an overwhelming and irrefutable history of malpractice in so many crucial aspects of its construction. I oppose any plant being built and operated on a skinny, over-populated island where the phrase, "Go West, young man," takes on larger-than-life proportions. I oppose a plant being built where the routes of exodus will, by physical mandate, become expressions of nightmares enlivened, routes of futile exile which will lead not quickly enough and to nowhere.

Do not wonder long if there are many Islanders who feel as I do. My family does not want to be forced from its home. Only an act served up by Mother Nature should be powerful enough to cause this. I have

no faith in the NRC, pre- or post-accident, reassuring us that our area's level of contamination is now deemed acceptable according to NRC, and/or federal established limits. We do not have the resources to sustain ourselves if we were forced to relocate. It is unforeseeable how many families would appreciate an extended dormitory stay in some school's all-purpose room, or a forced vacation, tucked away in Nassau Coliseum, granting they could find our reservations.

The devastating part of this monstrous scenario involves parents, children and others who depend exclusively on others. Should an accident occur and LILCO decided it would be in their best interests to eventually get around to reporting it, how to get to our children? With the crush and confusion of an impossible evacuation effort going on, one can well imagine with cold horror how impossible it will be in far too many cases. How to find our children if we can not get to them immediately? How many hands will they pass through

before we reach them? These are agonizing questions; there are so many more we must ask ourselves since no one will ask for us. It is so hard to realize we are allowing this to happen because we will not take our own fate in our own hands. If we had done the latter, you would now be following the mandate of your constituency and would not have slinked back from what you know to be right.

There are obdurate ostriches among us. Some of us, you included, play a pretend, make-believe game. How many times have we reinforced the concept to our youngsters, that "pretend" is no good in situations that have in them an element of risk or hurt? But here we are, grown adults, pretending that at least a minority of plant managerial and construction staff KNEW what they were doing as they piece-mealed together this "Queen of the Reactors." Because of our pretend game, we have as much acquiesced, and seemingly placed in LILCO's trusting, tender

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Wrong Once Wrong Again

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has come under constant fire for their arm-in-arm relationship with utilities and the nuclear power industry. The NRC has been continuously branded as the promoters of the nuclear industry, rather than the regulatory body that acts to protect the public's welfare. Numerous actions by the NRC, and statements by its commissioners, give evidence that these charges are more accurate than not.

A case in point: Way back in the early 70's when the construction permit for the Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant was the subject of hearings, Irving Like, who was representing the Lloyd Harbor Study Group in its opposition to the plant, raised the issue of safe evacuation. The construction permit should not be granted, he argued, because a safe evacuation would not be possible because of the unique geography of the area in which it was proposed.

"Not now," said the NRC hearings officer. The matter of evacuation was a subject to be discussed at the time the operating license for the plant was being considered. In other words, "let's build the plant first, then think about evacuation." The NRC was joined in this view by attorneys for LILCO, as one might expect.

And that's what happened. The plant was built, after many, many delays and charges of shoddy construction, diesels that did not work properly without cracking, and growing controversy over its safety. And the cost skyrocketed to unbelievable heights. When the final costs are tabulated, the ultimate cost will be over \$5 billion, and the per kilowatt cost of the power it would generate will bankrupt the region. The LILCO rate for business electricity use is already the highest in

the nation, and it's going to get much worse when the costs of the Shoreham fiasco are added to the rate base.

While Shoreham was under construction, there was an accident at Three Mile Island, the accident that the NRC and the nuclear industry said could never happen. And, after the fact, the NRC began demanding changes in safety related equipment, and an evacuation plan.

It now turns out that the NRC was wrong back in the early 70's when it ruled that evacuation could not be discussed at the initial stage. Everyone with an ounce of common sense realized this. It makes no sense at all to build a \$5 billion plant in an area where a safe evacuation is not possible. And last year, a federal court ruled that the NRC did not have the power or the right to rule out any discussion of evacuation in the construction permit phase. Congress did not give the NRC the power to make such a decision, the court ruled.

As a result, the NRC has changed its regulations, as of May 8, which will now permit the litigation of offsite emergency preparedness in the initial stages of an application for a nuclear plant--before it is built, not after.

Unfortunately, the court's decision and the NRC's revision of its regulations comes too late to have an impact in protecting the public against Shoreham. The plant is there, and those with dollar signs in their eyes keep insisting that since all that money was spent we might just as well use it, putting safety aside for dollars.

Strangely, there has been little discussion about possible alternatives for the Shoreham facility. A while back someone suggested the nuclear equipment be removed, another source of heat put in place to

create the energy to activate the generating section, utilizing the remainder of the nuclear facility as a full scale mock-up of a nuclear plant to be used for educational purposes, or to run tests in the event of an accident at another plant. There were a couple of "Hey, that's not a bad idea," but no real effort to explore that possibility.

Nor has there been any real effort to determine if the containment area of Shoreham, with its thick concrete walls, could be utilized as a burning chamber for garbage, which could provide the fuel to create the steam to generate electricity. Silly thought? Perhaps. But would the end result--producing electricity and getting rid of our garbage disposal problems, without the threat of an accident which could force an evacuation--be worth some study? We think so.

While putting the evacuation issue where it belongs, at the start of hearings on a nuclear plant, comes too late to help the people of Suffolk County, the NRC continues to play its games in another scheduling matter. The NRC is about to give Shoreham its blessing for low power tests. That would give LILCO the opportunity to contaminate the fuel, start the clock on decommissioning costs, and give the dollar sign people another opportunity to say, "Now that it will

cost us to decommission the plant we might as well try to put an evacuation plan in place, even if that plan can't guarantee the safety of all of the people."

Until the primary concern, a safe evacuation, is resolved, low power tests should not be approved. If the evacuation issue is not resolved, the plant, under the NRC's own regulations, cannot be granted an operating license. Why then would the NRC put the cart before the horse? The NRC was wrong once! The NRC is wrong again! And someplace down the line a court is going to rule that it is wrong to contaminate the fuel before all problems that could prevent the issuance of an operating license are resolved. But that decision, too, will be after the fact, too late to protect the public against Shoreham.

If there was ever an instance where "two wrongs don't make a right" could apply, the NRC's antics as they apply to Shoreham are a prime example. Isn't it time that those who supposedly represent the people of this area on the federal level take firm action to protect the public from this farce of an agency? Before people die as a result of its coddling of the nuclear industry?

And why not?

Special Session Needed

The New York State Legislature is rushing toward its summer recess with a flood of last minute bills of questionable value. The lazy days of summer which beckon our state officials are really nothing more than a continuation of the lazy days of the legislative session they are anxious to leave behind. Little has been accomplished during this session to resolve the biggest problems--energy and its costs--that faces state residents, more particularly residents of the downstate region.

This was to be the year that the state legislature came to grips with the allocation of low cost hydro power. The legislators failed to do so. It should have been the year that the legislators discussed and resolved the energy package put forth by Governor Mario Cuomo. But progress on those proposals was stalled in the state senate, where the leader there, Senator Warren Anderson, played politics to the hilt. And, unfortunately, our local senators sat back and let him get away with it. Anderson, at the end, came up with his own proposal which is, to say the least, suspect.

Back home, the threat of skyrocketing electric rates in our future continues to mount. LILCO has now earned the dubious distinction of charging the highest business rates in the nation. And the rates of general ratepayer usage will undoubtedly top all others as well. Local officials here have joined with LILCO

in pushing in a phase-in plan which is nothing more than the original plan offered by LILCO officials earlier. There's talk--but no proof--of being able to hold the rate increases to two percent a year. Compounded that adds up in a hurry, and ratepayers can look forward to a future in which current rates will double, at least.

Unfortunately, there's little that can be done without action at the state level. When businesses, such as Grumman, were threatening to move if they didn't get cheaper power, they wound up with an allocation. When Suffolk Life went to court to demand that the people be given equal consideration in the allocation of the lower cost power, the court declared that was up to the state legislature to do, not the courts. And, as we have already noted, the legislature did some talking about the need, but took no action to solve it.

The problem is clear: Long Island needs low cost power to meet its future electrical needs, and it needs it now. The reallocation of Power Authority hydro power is vital. Shoreham, whether it goes on line or not, is not the solution. Action at the Albany level to redistribute available power to those areas most in need is a must. A special session of the state legislature to deal with this problem--and this problem alone--must be called. We've had enough empty promises and talk. We need action. Now.

And why not?

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