

The Energy Future

What To Do With

Shoreham

As the year 2000 approaches the United States has been forced to consider the question of where our energy will come from in the future. At the center of this controversy on Long Island stands Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant. Capable of producing 820 megawatts, supporters believe the plant serves as the Long Island Lighting Company's (LILCO) answer to Nassau and Suffolk's energy needs. However, debates concerning nuclear power and the Shoreham plant rage, including issues such as safety, evacuation routes, financial costs, disposal of nuclear waste, and alleged poor management of LILCO.

Those who favor the opening of LILCO consider nuclear power the only possible solution for the future of the world. They claim other energy sources are in limited supply and will make the United States dependent on other countries, including Canadian hydraulic power. They find the safety measures of Shoreham to be adequate and insist that Governor Cuomo's plan to close Shoreham is not in the financial best interest of the people.

Those against Shoreham believe that the plant poses a health threat to all on the island. They believe that proper precautions have not been taken by LILCO to ensure the plant's operational safety and accuse LILCO of being more concerned with profit than people's safety.

Both sides argue about the financial benefits of nuclear power. Supporters claim that although nuclear power requires a larger capital investment, the actual operating costs are less than using coal. They claim that since this initial investment has already been made, the closing of Shoreham now would not be advisable. Those against Shoreham dispute the fact that operating costs are lower, and feel that nuclear power will still cost more than coal. They also argue that the cost of building of Shoreham has been much greater than had been planned. They blame this on the poor management of LILCO and believe poor management will lead to similar costs in the future.

The history of Shoreham started in the late 1960's when the nuclear plant which had been planned for the Lloyd Harbor was moved to Shoreham, a town in Eastern Suffolk. The plant was again introduced in 1976 as part of seven nuclear power plants to be built on Long Island by LILCO; three were to be in Shoreham and four in Jamesport. While construction of the Jamesport plants was never started, construction of the Shoreham plant was started in the late 1970's and finished in the 1980's. However, after the plant was complete the opening was stalled by safety checks, civil and political intervention.

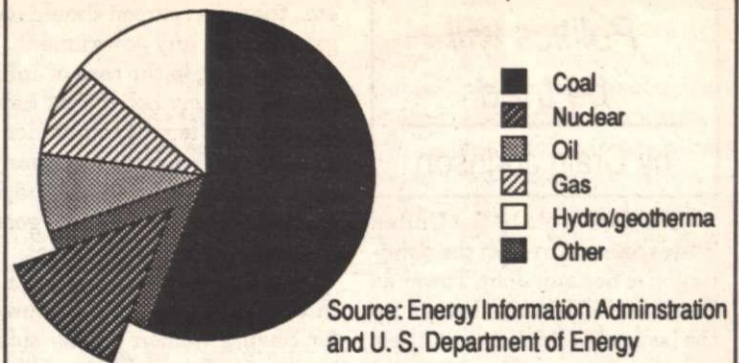
In the fall of 1988 Governor Mario Cuomo introduced his first plan to close Shoreham. Included in this plan was that Shoreham would be sold to New York State for the price of one dollar. In exchange, LILCO would be allowed a 5% rate increase for each of the next ten years. Although the plan was passed by the LILCO stockholders, the New York State Legislature refused to act on it.

On February 28, 1989 Governor Cuomo made a similar deal with LILCO. This deal, however, does not require the state legislature to approve the plan. Shortly after the plan was announced LILCO filed for more rate increases than the fall deal had included. The new proposal included two rate hikes this year, one in 1990 and eight additional ones between 1992 and 1999. Some of these hikes would be greater than the earlier announced 5%.

The Public Service Commission is scheduled to announce whether the increases will be accepted on April 15. If the deal is not accepted by all parties before April 15, LILCO will have the opportunity to call off the deal and open Shoreham.

The future of Long Island's energy needs is in the hands of Governor Cuomo, LILCO, and the Public Service Commission. It is the duty of each citizen to let their educated feelings be known so that they can assist the government in making a decision "for the people."

1984 Principal Energy Sources



The Student Verdict



Eric Evans
11th Grade

Yes, I think it should be opened because nuclear power could be very beneficial because all of the natural resource problems and things like that, like dumping in the ocean, could be stopped. There are nuclear accidents once in a while, and they're bad, but it's better than polluting the air and stuff.



Ed Gold
12th Grade

No, I don't think they should open Shoreham. I don't think the escape routes for people to get out in case of an accident are suitable. They are not good enough.



Jackie Kane
10th Grade

No. It is wasting our money. We shouldn't be spending so much money on something we don't need.



Jen Welles
9th grade

I don't think so because nuclear waste is pointless, and there are other ways to get energy.



Sameer Upadhyay
12th Grade

No, because the design is very bad.