For Immediate Release
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City Council Must Examine Green Energy Alternatives to Nuclear Expansion Before Vote

Groups propose a 10-point alternative plan that would cost less and create local jobs

(San Antonio) At a press conference today, activists and energy experts called for San Antonio City Council to vote against nuclear expansion because they have not compared the costs and benefits of a comprehensive green plan to building additional reactors. The group presented a 10-point plan that could provide more energy at lower cost and create thousands of local jobs.

"San Antonio could meet its energy needs at less cost through a combination of energy efficiency, renewable energy with storage, and geothermal energy while putting local people to work," said Amanda Haas of the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. "The STEP and Mission Verde plans, if enacted, will help us move towards a sustainable energy future. However, the only plan before the City Council is a plan for more nuclear reactors. We call on City Council to halt the push for nuclear reactors which would leave a legacy of radioactive waste and instead pursue a safer, green energy future that will create thousands of local jobs in San Antonio instead of exporting them to Bay City and Japan."

"We have developed a 10-point plan that studies show would be cheaper than building the nuclear reactors," said Tom "Smitty" Smith of Public Citizen's Texas office. "These alternatives would include more weatherization, retrofits, building codes, lighting, solar, wind with storage, geothermal, biomass, natural gas and combined heat and power. In combination, these resources could more than meet San Antonio's energy needs at costs below that of the additional reactors. The demand for electricity is down by 7% nationally from 2008-2009 and many new federal programs may decrease the demand for electricity even further. CPS's own projections for electricity demand have fallen. City Council should develop a comprehensive alternative plan and see which is cheaper before they vote on what could be $6.5 billion dollar mistake."

Two independent studies on CPS and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission data have shown that alternatives are far cheaper than a nuclear plant. While CPS is making big commitments to weatherization, they have been typically spending more money than others to achieve the same result. CPS is spending two to three times more per saved megawatt than other utilities in Texas or Houston. In Houston the city teamed with its local utility and did a neighborhood-by-neighborhood retrofit program that saved 14.6% of the energy usage in each home for $1,000, a fraction of what CPS is spending. A recent study for CPS found the cost of efficiency was about half the cost of the proposed nuclear reactor. If CPS builds the nuclear plant and the energy is too expensive to sell it could send the utility into a nuclear death spiral.

As an example of the kinds of energy savings that could be obtained, Bob Spermo of Bullseye Home Energy Audits reviewed the results of a home energy audit he performed on a local home and found that the homeowner could save energy in her home through insulation in the attic, solar screens, radiant barriers, and

replacing old air conditioners with more efficient ones. In other newer homes it makes sense to tighten up leaking ducts and do blower door tests to look for leaks.

"Solar panels are a cost effective way to capture the power of the sun and to save energy. The City has adopted a goal of installing solar on 50,000 homes and 6,000 businesses by 2020. If they were to do this it would cut the need for 250 MW of energy and create 1,000 new jobs, according to the City's Mission Verde Plan." said Dustin Aubrey of Nova Star Solar. "The cost of solar panels is declining rapidly. If the city council would make a large scale solar PV commitment and make CPS do it, we could be one of the nation's most solar cities."

Houston has recently agreed to a 25-year solar power purchase agreement at a price of 8.2 cents per kilowatt-hour for the first year. Houston's **NRG Energy Inc.** (NYSE: NRG) will foot the $40 million bill to develop, build and own the 10 megawatt solar farm in northwest Houston. This is less than the projected price of energy from the nuclear plant which is 8.5 cents per KWh.

"One of the cheapest ways to save energy is to pull the energy from underground. Texas is blessed with steady temperatures in rock below the ground surface that can be captured and circulated through heat exchangers in our homes and offices, reducing dramatically the energy we need for heating and cooling," said Charlie Lonsberry from Southwest Mechanical, who installs geothermal systems. "Many San Antonio homes use geothermal energy for heating, hot water, and cooling – and they've been doing so for years. Geothermal can also be done on a large scale to produce electricity."

"City Council hasn't done a good job of looking at the alternatives. They have relied entirely on CPS's cost estimates, which are often old or biased, and as a result they are making a decision without adequate analysis of alternatives. Our 10-point plant would be cheaper than building new nuclear reactors," said Peggy Day of the Alamo Group of the Sierra Club. "The City Council should examine the alternatives before voting to fund the bonds for further nuclear development. Not only will this decision affect the cost consumers pay, but it also has grave moral consequences. We will create waste that will be radioactive and can cause cancer or birth defects for 10,000 years. 60 years after the dawn of the nuclear age we have yet to figure out what to do with the waste. What right do we have to leave this toxic mess behind?"

For more information on the alternative plan see www.energiamia.org

- Costs of Current and Planned Nuclear Power Plants in Texas; A Consumer Perspective Clarence Johnson for Public Citizen, Texas Office, April 2009
- Assessing Nuclear Plant Capital Costs for the Two Proposed NRG Reactors at the South Texas Project Site Arjun Makhijani, Ph.D. March 24, 2008