



*Rochester Committee  
for Scientific Information  
Rochester, NY*

*RCSI Bulletin 58  
Statement Released on October 31, 1969 by R.C.S.I.*

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October 31, 1969*

THE ROCHESTER COMMITTEE FOR SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION  
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This study is a joint project of the Radiation and Water Pollution Sub-Committees. Participating members are G. G. Berg, Herman S. Forest, Howard Huddle, Robert E. Lee and E. Grant Pike.

After some further information is received, the Rochester Committee for Scientific Information will issue a bulletin on Rochester Gas & Electric Co.'s Robert Ginna nuclear power plant.

The bulletin will consider two questions:

1. Does the Ginna plant meet acceptable standards for control of radioactive waste?
2. Who will make the decisions on the location and operation of nuclear power plants in New York State, particularly on the shores of Lake Ontario?

We have some unresolved questions, but we think now that the Ginna plant is of excellent design, with features which R.C.S.I. has advocated for all nuclear power plants.

Data on radioactive emissions, which will be reported to the Atomic Energy Commission, will be made public through the Commission's quarterly reports. Also, the New York State radiological monitoring network could independently sample and report results to the public.

No uncontrolled release of radioactive material is planned. Both gases and liquid, including accidental spillage into drains, will be held and their release controlled at low levels under favorable conditions for dispersal.

The levels will be far below required standards, and the company is to be commended for building to the best of available technology rather than to minimum standards.

Radioactive wastes will be concentrated and removed from the liquid where most of them accumulate. Even liquids with relatively low levels of radiation will not be released, but put through another cleaning process.

The design of the plant reduces the release of tritium (radioactive heavy hydrogen) to the environment as far as possible. While the complete removal of tritium is not possible at this time, we suggest that the Ginna plant could be used for experimental work on the further reduction of tritium in wastewater. Improvement of tritium control would interest not only biologists but the photography industry.

Heat pollution would probably be insignificant with the whole of Lake Ontario to absorb it, and no particular biological value in the discharge area. But

again, the company has gone beyond obligation in designing its hot water discharge to minimize damage. Such design improvements will be of great value where the discharge area is smaller, or more critical from a biological viewpoint.

We were impressed by the effort of the company to safeguard the environment. However, we are most apprehensive about future nuclear power development in New York.

Our approval of the Ginna plant is not blanket approval of other existing plants nor of the many which are certain to be built in the next 30 years. A new kind of decision and new means of regulation are required where a large number of nuclear power plants are involved and we find that both the public and the legislature are insufficiently informed about such decisions, and may find themselves unable to affect them.

Since the Brookwood Science Information Center conveys the company's view to the public it is important that its presentations should be responsible and correct. Presentations have been excellent in technique, but unbalanced.

It is regrettable that Brookwood has not presented the hazards as well as the benefits of nuclear power. We believe the public is capable of considering both rationally and does not need to be protected from facts.

In addition, the company should scrupulously avoid such past presentation mistakes as, "No radioactive material whatsoever will be released to the environment", and "Thermal pollution is good for fish".

The Rochester Committee for Scientific Information is deeply indebted to Mr. Francis E. Drake Jr., Chairman of the Board of the Rochester Gas and Electric Company, who was both courteous and helpful in arranging an unusual conference between R.C.S.I. and RG&E. Both regular staff members of RG&E and consultants who had been engaged by RG&E for the Ginna project came to the meeting and answered our questions.

This release is based on word-of-mouth information obtained at that meeting. The full report will be based on written information supplied by the company's staff and consultants.