

The Taimyr Against the "Taimyr". Nuclear powered icebreakers have been visiting Dikson seaport for 30 years and there hasn't been a single accident during this time. But this fact did not convince the inhabitants of the Taimyr Autonomous Okrug, who were quick to dub the nuclear powered "Taimyr" a "floating Chernobyl". The people were assured that the icebreaker was safe: that the physics and design of its reactor totally precluded a Chernobyl type accident. And how will a transport link be assured between villages on the two shores of the river, which are separated by an icebreaker channel in winter? Agriculture in the obrug is suffering millions of rubles in losses every year as a result of this.

Under pressure from the public, the Okrug Party Committee and the Okrug Executive Committee took the decision not to permit the "Taimyr" to penetrate inside the Taimyr region without comprehensive scientific study of the possible consequences. A high-level delegation of specialists from the Taimyr region and Krasnoyarsk were dispatched to Murmansk and conducted an environmental assessment of the vessel. They signed a protocol about studying the possible consequences of operating the "Taimyr" on the Enisei and about studies, financed by the Ministry of the Maritime Fleet and the concern "Norilskii Nikel", on the winter navigation season and its impact on the environment and economy of the Taimyr Autonomous Okrug. In December permission was given for the icebreaker to make one trial run to Dudinka, where a large number of residents were allowed to come aboard and tour the ship. Permission was then given for the "Taimyr" to make test runs on the Enisei.

Shortly thereafter, however, under the prevailing difficult ice conditions in the Kara Sea, the nuclear powered icebreakers "Sibir" and "Taimyr" collided, although their operational state was not affected. And then, early in 1990 the Taimyr residents forwarded a demand to the USSR Supreme Soviet: although the design of the nuclear powered vessel limits the chances of an accident to one in a million, such an accident could happen - there being no guarantees to the contrary - and for that reason it was necessary to ban the use of nuclear powered ships on the Enisei until the results of comprehensive, authoritative and independent studies had been received.