

Emergency Evacuation Impossible at New Hampshire's Seabrook Reactor

Ever wonder if the nuclear reactor in your area has an evacuation plan that would work in an emergency? Have you ever been stuck in barely moving traffic on an interstate highway when there was absolutely no crisis?

People driving near the Seabrook reactor in New Hampshire have. And they have reason to worry too, especially after the nonprofit group We the People (WTP) and its founder Stephen Comley, Sr. sponsored a billboard in the town of Salisbury, and produced a widely seen public service video* of traffic jams on Interstate 95, the escape route, warning, "CAUTION: No Evacuation Possible."

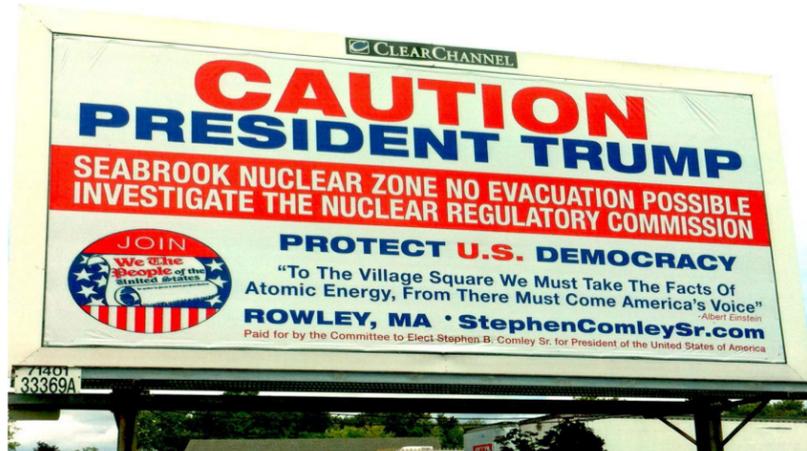
We the People's public warnings have been so effective that major state politicians and town councils within the 10-mile "Emergency Planning Zone" or evacuation area, are raising their own alarms.

Massachusetts State Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr and State Representative Brad Hill wrote Oct. 10, 2018, to Mass. Attorney General Maura Healey, complaining of "constituent inquiries" about Seabrook's evacuation plans. The lawmakers wrote that the public "has become increasingly concerned about effectively evacuating the area in the event [of] a nuclear emergency," noting that the "drone-recorded video of the Hampton Beach during the summer tourist season ... shows the heavy traffic congestion on the seacoast."

Comley and We the People have also succeeded in winning town council resolutions from half a dozen

local municipalities in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, that call on state and federal agencies to convene a public hearing where emergency first responders could explain the evacuation plans.

Last September 25, New Hampshire State Representative Peter Schmidt wrote to AG Healey about the "urgency" of having first responders "testify as to the plans and possibilities for safely, effectively and expeditiously evacuating the seacoast in the event of a nuclear emergency." Several New Hampshire and Massachusetts towns within the evacuation zone



The whistleblowers group We the People sponsored this billboard in Salisbury, New Hampshire, warning drivers about the inadequacy of an emergency evacuation from the Seabrook reactor.

have "strongly endorsed We the People's call for this first responder hearing," Schmidt wrote.

Rep. Schmidt's letter raised two additional issues that Mr. Comley and WTP have brought to light.

What Schmidt called "some sort of gag order" has allegedly been imposed on the Massachusetts State Police and the New Hampshire National Guard, forbidding them from speaking about evacuation issues.

Mr. Comley made a formal, recorded presentation to the Mass. State Police on Sept. 2, 2016, regarding the question of the gag order. Then, the record of the proceedings was lost, according to Trooper Christina Lucin of the state patrol's Fraud Identification Unit. Rep. Schmidt complained to AG Healey that "[T]he disappearance of the record is very troubling."

Seabrook is 13 miles south of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and 40 miles north of Boston. These cities are outside the 10-mile evacuation zone, but in March 2011, the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) recommended evacuation of US residents within 50 miles of Japan's Fukushima meltdowns.

The Seabrook reactor is set between Seabrook and Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, only 1.2 miles east of Interstate 95; Hampton Beach and its popular state park are just 1.6 miles to the east.

In January 2018, the town of Merrimac, Massachusetts (8.6 miles from the reactor) joined six other communities inside the evacuation zone "calling for the NRC to hold a hearing on whether the Seabrook, NH nuclear power plant's evacuation plan can be effectively implemented."

Healey's office has still not agreed to schedule a public hearing for first responders. —**John LaForge**

Plowshares Activists Say Prosecution Violates Religious Freedom

On April 4, 2018, seven participants of the Kings Bay Plowshares entered the Kings Bay Submarine Base in Georgia, hung banners and poured blood. Their protest against the base's Trident submarines marked the 50th commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination. Clare Grady, Martha Hennessey, Patrick O'Neill, and Carmen Trotta have been released pending trial, while Father Steve Kelly, Mark Colville and Elizabeth McAlister remain jailed in Brunswick, Georgia. Later charged with three federal felonies and one misdemeanor, the activists were ordered by the court to submit Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) Supplemental Briefs, which were filed on Jan. 18. As the one-year anniversary of their disarmament action approaches, we share excerpts from some of those declarations.

Because of participants' deeply held religious convictions, the seven contend that the charges of conspiracy, depredation of property on a naval installation, depredation of government property, and trespassing, are an inordinate burden to their free exercise of religion, and violate the RFRA. They argue that since the government has neglected to offer them the least-restrictive means to settle the charges brought against them for acts carried out as part of their religious beliefs, the charges should be dismissed. As we go to press, the court has not yet ruled on the motion to dismiss. The seven activists face up to 25 years if convicted on all counts.

From the Declaration of Elizabeth McAlister:

I make this affidavit to explain why I entered and symbolically disarmed the facility protecting, celebrating, and

worshipping nuclear weapons at King's Bay Trident Naval Base.

I write this from jail where I have been since my arrest at Kings Bay April 5, 2018.... Due to the government's actions, I am faced with the choice of either following my conscience and living a life consistent with my faith and beliefs and going to jail, or denying the faith and beliefs with which I have tried to live with my whole life and staying out of jail. I am 78 years old. Going to jail for my beliefs keeps me away from my loving children and grandchildren at an important time in their lives and mine. But the idolatry of these nuclear weapons and the government which protects their massive destructive power, leave me no choice, I must follow my conscience and my faith...

From the Declaration of Martha Hennessey:

...I am being threatened with prison for following my conscience, or being allowed to retain my freedom if I ignore the primacy of my conscience... Imprisoning me for my religious beliefs and civic duty

to point out government crimes against humanity would prevent my continued positive contributions to my family and society. My country's threat to use nuclear bombs in a first strike capacity as outlined in the most recent Nuclear Posture Review compels me to follow my conscience and religious beliefs.... As in all Plowshares actions from the beginning of the movement, inspiration comes from the [Christian biblical] Scriptural readings of Isaiah 2:4 to turn swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. The pouring of blood on the Missile Shrine and where the weapons are maintained is a symbolic act of contrition and remorse for the shedding of blood of innocent victims when the bomb was used in Japan in 1945...

From the Declaration of Clare Grady (who repeated part of the Action Statement read prior to entering the Naval Base):

"Nuclear weapons kill every day by their mere existence. Their production requires mining, refining, testing, and dumping of radioactive material, which poisons Sacred Earth and Water, primarily on Indigenous land. We see the billions of dollars it takes to build and maintain the Trident as stolen resources, which are desperately needed for human needs. We see nuclear weapons as a cocked gun, the biggest gun, used 24/7 to ENFORCE the many layers of state-sponsored violence and deadly force required to maintain white supremacy, global capitalism, and global domination"...

Hammering dents in the monuments to the missile is [one] step I took to withdraw my consent... The hammer I used was made with metal from melted down guns, weapons converted into peaceful tools... Our non-violent symbolic act of disarmament seeks to withdraw consent from the Trident weapons system, and the systems of theft and domination that the Trident enforces.

Elizabeth McAlister calls on the conscience of us all:

*Knowing and doing are at the core of every examined life. The hardest question our culture has faced, and it has faced it repeatedly is this: "If you knew, why didn't you do something?" —**Kelly Lundeen***



The Kings Bay Plowshares activists from left, Elizabeth McAlister, Father Steve Kelly, Carmen Trotta, Mark Colville, Martha Hennessey, Clare Grady, and Patrick O'Neill. Since their April 4, 2018 action, Colville, Kelly and McAlister have been held in jail while the others have been released pending trial.