Nuclear Shorts

Nuclear Power Rejected in UN Climate Report, and by COP26 Climate Change Conference

The August 2021 report from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has rejected nuclear power for any role in confronting the crisis. Nuclear News online says about the report that “nuclear does not mention and when it is, its negative effects on climate and environment are made clear.” The UN’s 3,000-page analysis warns of possible radiation disasters and says the rapid warming of surface waters may cause cut-offs because reactors can “be challenged when using warmer river waters for cooling.” Meanwhile, the World Nuclear Association has complained in a letter that every application made by nuclear groups for exhibits at the UN’s 26th Conference of the Parties on Climate Change (COP26), being held in Glasgow, Scotland in November, had been rejected. The complaint was laughed off by some. “Having failed with its ridiculous claim that nuclear is cheap, the latest woe from the nuclear industry is to tell us that nuclear reactors are the answer to climate change,” said Richard Dixon, director of Friends of the Earth Scotland.

“With renewables and energy efficiency cheaper and quicker to build and run than nuclear, [lobbyists] have already lost this argument and should have no place to speak”, said COP26.

Hurricane Cut Off-site Power to Louisiana Reactor

On Saturday, August 28, just before hurricane Ida slammed into Louisiana with winds reaching 153 mph, operators of the Waterford 3 nuclear reactor in Killyana, 25 miles west of New Orleans, shut the reactor down as a precaution. Then Sunday, August 29, when Ida crashed ashore, the electric grid went down. Generating electricity, 830,000 homes and to the Waterford reactor. "Plant power is being provided via emergency diesel generators,” the Nuclear Regulatory Commission said. Off-site electric power is so important, reactor operators take it for granted. “But these back-up systems don’t always prevent disaster. The emergency generators in Fukushima, Japan were all destroyed by the earthquake and the tsunami that led to simultaneous meltdowns at the Dai-ichi and Dai-ii reactors.” On August 31, Entergy also suffered “a major loss of communications capability … between the NRC and the reactor Control Room,” the NRC reported, and the Emergency Notification System (ENS) was completely lost for 30 minutes. Full ENS communications capability between the NRC and the Emergency Center at the NRC and the Waterford plant were lost until 11:45 p.m. Tuesday, August 31. — Sacramento Bee, Aug. 31; and NRC Event Reports 55435, 55436, and 55443 for Aug. 30 and 31, 2021

Absurd: Warships Named After Nonviolent Activists

In July, the Navy christened the first of a new class of Navel ships, the USS John Lewis, named a warship after the late nonviolent activist, civil and human rights leader, and long-time Congressional Representative. The Navy also announced plans to name the entire class of ships (known as oilers) after civil rights leaders including Harvey Milk, Bobby Kennedy, Lucy Stone, and Sojourner Truth. The absurdity was opposed by US Rep. Steve Palazzo, R-Miss., who sponsored a bill to prevent warships from being named for people who didn’t serve in the military. The measure never reached the floor for a vote. In 1961, John Lewis was one of the original thirteen Freedom Riders who challenged segregation on interstate busses, and he was among those beaten and arrested. He later chaired the radical Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee which led lunch counter sit-ins and other civil disobedience campaigns. Lewis was eventually elected to the US House of Representatives seventeen times, where among fellow Democrats he was known as “the conscience of Congress.” The Navy’s coopting of Lewis’s name can be seen as a cynical PR appeal to the African American community following the police murder of George Floyd. — US Naval Institute News, July 18, 2021; Washington Post, July 16, 2016; Atlanta Journal-Constitution, July 21, 2006

Help Save and Improve Radiation Exposure Compensation Act

On Sept. 22, US Senators Mike Crapo (R-Ind.) and Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), and Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-NM) introduced S 2798 and HR 5335 to continue and expand the 1990 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA). The bill strengthens the RECA programs which provide compensation to uranium mill and mining workers, atomic veterans, and “downwinders” of nuclear tests in some affected states. Without Congressional action, RECA will expire in July 2022. The expansion of coverage under the new bill will include some uranium workers who have been excluded by the original bill. “The government and uranium industry made millions in profits while knowingly killing workers, and this injustice has gone on for over 20 years now,” said Linda Evers, a former uranium worker from Grants, New Mexico. Other updates to the bill would include expanding coverage to downwinders in Idaho, Montana, Colorado, Guam, New Mexico, and additional counties in Utah, Nevada, and Arizona; adding new compensable diseases; and including medical benefits for other affected groups. Tell your representatives to support HR 5338 and S 2798. — Susan Gordon, Larry King, and Linda Evers wrote this update for the Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment.

Fukushima Waste Water Update

Tokyo Electric Power Co. said in August that it intends to use an underground piping system to pump radioactive waste cooling water into the Pacific Ocean. The government’s April decision allowing Tope to disperse the pollution into the public commons over the next several decades caused an international uproar, with some countries promising to fight the decision in the United Nations, the World Court or perhaps the World Trade Organization. Nuclear watchdogs warned that Tope’s use of underground pipes to disperse the contaminated waste water allows the dumping to be unregulated and difficult to monitor. — The Guardian, Aug. 26; & Agence France-Presse, Aug. 26, 2021

Some resources noted in this edition

- Alliance for Environmental Strategies
- Beyond Nuclear
- Citizens Awareness Network
- Don’t Waste Michigan
- Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action
- Hanford Challenge
- Nuclear Information & Resource Service
- Public Service Wisconsin
- Rainstration
- Stop Line 3
- The Nuclear Resister
- Alliance for Environmental Strategies
- Beyond Nuclear
- Don’t Waste Michigan
- Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action, Poulsbo, WA (360)979-8697; gzccenter.org: Email: gzccenter@att.net
- Hanford Challenge, Seattle, WA (206) 292-2580; Web: hanfordchallenge.org: Email: info@hanfordchallenge.org
- Nuclear Information & Resource Service, Takoma Park, MD (301) 279-6477; Email: nir@nirs.org; Web: nirs.org
- Nuclear Resister, Tucson, AZ (520) 323-8697; Email: nukeresister@jigie.org; Web: nukeresister.org
- Public Service Wisconsin, Madison, WI (608) 232-9945; Web: psw-wisconsin.org; Email: info@pswswisconsin.org
- Rainstration, Ocean City, NJ Email: ojdiejoe@aol.com; Web: radiation.org
- Stop Line 3, Web: stopline3.org; and facebook
- Radiation and Public Health Project, Ocean City, NJ Email: ojdiejoe@aol.com; Web: radiation.org

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