



Congressman

<http://www.house.gov/kucinich>**Dennis J. Kucinich***Ohio's 10th Congressional District*

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Public Comments From Congressman Dennis J. Kucinich At The Restart Hearing Of The Davis Besse Nuclear Power Plant

"We are here today because two years ago we got lucky. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) coaxed Davis Besse to shut down and soon thereafter workers found a hole in the top of the reactor. A major nuclear accident was averted. We got lucky because the NRC was concerned about a separate safety issue and First Energy just happened to find the hole.

"Much has been learned about how this happened. It is clear that First Energy failed to safely operate the Davis Besse power plant, the NRC failed to effectively regulate the nuclear power plant and both entities failed to place the health and safety of those living near this power plant above the profits of First Energy.

"Investigations into this incident have revealed that First Energy possessed the empirical data that suggested a problem existed. For example, air-monitoring filters were constantly clogged with rust, suggesting a serious a problem. First Energy chose to ignore the problems to protect its profits.

"The NRC Inspector General has found that the NRC chose to protect the 'financial impact on FENOC' rather than force compliance with safety regulations. After the shutdown of Davis Besse, the NRC released a report that documented its 'Lessons Learned.' The report made a few recommendations as to how the NRC might avoid future incidents like the corrosion problems at Davis Besse. Since the release of the final report, a draft 'lessons learned' report surfaced that contained several far reaching recommendations that would in fact make a real difference in nuclear power plant safety. But to avoid costly regulations on the industry, those recommendations did not make the final report.

"My top goal is public safety and I cannot ask my constituents to trust the word of First Energy or the Nuclear Regulatory Commission if they cannot place safety ahead of economic interests.

"To date the NRC has denied all efforts to push for greater inspections of Davis Besse. I personally petitioned the NRC and several public interest groups also petitioned the NRC to force a more complete review of Davis Besse.

"It is well known that the NRC forwarded a criminal investigation to the Department of Justice for review. As it seems clear that First Energy is at least suspected of criminal conduct, it only makes sense to wait for the conclusion of that investigation before Davis Besse is permitted to restart. Confidence in First Energy's operation of this nuclear power plant cannot be determined with an ongoing criminal investigation. The public has the right to hear about First Energy's wrongdoing before First Energy is rewarded with reactor restart.

"I continue to oppose the restart of Davis Besse because I do not have confidence in First Energy or the NRC to place safety ahead of profits."

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