

PRESS RELEASE

STATEMENT BY NO MORE FUKUSHIMAS! AT THE NRC ASR MEETING HELD ON APRIL 23, 2012 IN ROCKVILLE, MD

We believe that today's discussion on alkali-silica reaction (ASR) has missed the forest for the trees. We cannot solve the ASR problem unless we address its two-pronged cause: first, technical matters, and second, the failure of Seabrook management and the NRC itself to address the concrete degradation problem before it became severe.

We would like to focus now on the second cause. Last month, the Seabrook plant site vice president (Paul Freeman) sent the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report to the NRC. The report gave a glowing review about Seabrook plant's "culture of safety" with one notable exception. On page 8, the IAEA clearly blames Seabrook's management for knowing the potential for an ASR problem from the start, but failing to do test borings until just prior to the relicensing period—suggesting *decades* of negligence.

The NRC's oversight has been equally appalling. How could the concrete degradation due to groundwater infiltration go on *for decades* without being identified earlier? The degradation has progressed to the point where the NRC characterized it as "severe" in some places, with structural integrity of the concrete significantly reduced. We say this notwithstanding NextEra's presentation today.

In what could be an attempt to obfuscate poor oversight, the NRC 2011 inspection report states that the walk-down inspectors "recently discovered" the ASR (see p. 17). Is the NRC implying that it had no knowledge of this before this inspection? Is the NRC stating that the

plant owners failed to reveal that there was ASR degradation? Did the inspectors fail to do a below surface inspection at the plant during all those years? We cannot understand how the NRC missed this until 2011; although we appreciate that they *finally* reported it to public while the Seabrook plant kept in from the public including public officials who must plan for evacuation.

Moreover, the public has now learned that the membrane around the plant that was intended to abate groundwater infiltration was ineffective from the start. The plant desperately pumped groundwater from the plant, but this also did not work adequately. Why didn't the NRC order the plant to fix or replace it? The NRC's lapse in judgment has certainly exacerbated the ASR problem—putting us in peril.

Finally, we are concerned that NRC is inexplicably giving its blessing to the “operability” of the plant in the short-term: we have not seen any peer-reviewed engineering studies that indicate the plant is safe from an earthquake—given the ASR-weakened concrete and potentially weakened rebar—both due to unabated groundwater infiltration.

Clearly, the ASR problem at the Seabrook plant is attributable as much to poor management and to inadequate oversight as it is to the ASR itself.

To fully address the ASR problem, we believe that

- **Only after a comprehensive third-party accounting of the Seabrook plant's management role and the NRC's role in managing and overseeing the ASR problem will this problem be solved; and**

- **since the ASR problem is a novel problem at a US nuclear power plant—we urge the NRC to stop the relicensing process and give experts—with peer review—plenty of time to develop a comprehensive remedy; and then**
- **require the plant to repair the concrete, abate the infiltration, and monitor the effectiveness of the remedy for years *before* considering relicensing.**

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

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