

Rulemaking Comments**PRM-50-104
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USNRC 169

From: Bruce Pringle [pringb@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, July 16, 2012 12:24 PM
To: Rulemaking Comments
Subject: Comments on PRM-50-104, Docket ID NRC-2012-0046

July 17, 2012 (1:35 pm)
OFFICE OF SECRETARY
RULEMAKINGS AND
ADJUDICATIONS STAFF

A major concern associated with Fukushima and other nuclear disasters is the evacuation of affected populations. In the United States, emergency planning for nuclear emergencies has remained largely static since 1980. The plans enacted after the Three Mile Island accident are outdated and do not adequately protect the health and safety of United States citizens.

The experiences of Fukushima and Chernobyl are direct evidence that radiation releases from nuclear accidents can be greater than computer modeling or simulations suggest. Indeed, the accident at Fukushima resulted in sustained and large releases of radiation for a period of several weeks. The current 10-mile emergency evacuation zone is obviously not adequate.

More than 150,000 people evacuated near Fukushima, from as far as 25 miles away--50,000 of those, according to the Associated Press (5/16/12) evacuated from outside the mandatory evacuation zones. Meanwhile, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission and U.S. State Department recommended that Americans within 50 miles of Fukushima evacuate. Even so, as much as 80% of the airborne radiation released at Fukushima blew directly over the Pacific Ocean, rather than populated areas. The NRC cannot rely on favorable wind patterns to protect the American public.

The ingestion pathway EPZ is also grossly inadequate, and should be expanded to 100 miles. Food contamination at both Fukushima and Chernobyl has been far reaching and persistent. In Chernobyl, radionuclides tainted crops and animal products hundreds of miles away. More than 25 years after that accident, sheep in Wales--hundreds of miles away--remain interdicted. Similarly, in Fukushima contamination of rice, milk, and other food has been exhibited 100 miles and more from the site.

Current NRC regulations do not require that emergency exercises take into consideration an initiating or concurrent natural disaster that might further complicate accidents and subsequent evacuation efforts. At Fukushima, a natural disaster (coupled with faulty reactor design) initiated the disaster. Both Fukushima and the U.S. experience with Hurricane Katrina demonstrate the difficulties associated with evacuating when a natural disaster strikes that causes roadways to wash out.

It is for all these reasons that I request that the NRC adopt the proposed rule expanding emergency planning zones to the respective 25, 50, and 100 mile zones and add a new requirement that emergency exercises include scenarios of regionally appropriate initiating or concurrent natural disasters.

Thank you,

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