

Rulemaking Comments**PRM-50-104
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256

From: Jeannette Hassberg [sistajean52@yahoo.com]
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OFFICE OF SECRETARY
RULEMAKINGS AND
ADJUDICATIONS STAFF

Events at Fukushima after the 3/11/2011 earthquake demonstrate that nuclear disasters have sustained and far reaching effects, especially as regards the speedy evacuation of affected populations.

In the United States, there have been no updates of emergency planning for nuclear emergencies since 1980, when regulations took hold after the Three Mile Island accident. These outdated and inadequate rules are an affront to US citizens' health and safety. A 10-mile emergency evacuation zone does not adequately protect from the effects of ionizing radiation, and real world experiences at Fukushima and Chernobyl give direct evidence that radiation releases from nuclear accidents can be much greater than computer modeling or simulations suggest. In fact the accident at Fukushima resulted in sustained releases of massive radiation for a period of several weeks.

More than 150,000 people evacuated Fukushima, from 25 miles away--50,000 of those, according to the Associated Press (5/16/12) 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. Nonetheless, as much as 80% of the airborne radiation released at Fukushima blew directly over the Pacific Ocean, rather than populated areas, so the NRC cannot rely on predictions of favorable wind patterns to protect the American public.

According to the National Academy of Sciences BEIR VII report, there is no safe dose of radiation, and women and children are affected more by radiation than men. Evacuation regulations must be protective of the most vulnerable in the population.

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.

Weather patterns are growing more extreme and dangerous. In 2011, hurricanes, earthquakes, and flooding caused damage to U.S. nuclear reactors. As such, emergency preparedness drills and exercises should include regionally appropriate natural disasters such as droughts, flooding, blizzards, earthquakes, wildfires, and hurricanes.

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For all these reasons 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 natural disasters.

Thank you,

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