

WCRM-GEIS2CEm Resource

From: Taffy Williams [twilliams@optonline.net]
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Re: Nuclear Waste (HLRW)

Stop making it. The only solution to the high-level radioactive waste (HLRW) problem is to not generate irradiated nuclear fuel in the first place. Our society's "preferred alternative" to nuclear power and the forever deadly radioactive waste it inevitably generates is efficiency and renewables, such as wind and solar power. As Dr. Arjun Makhijani, President of the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research, showed in his 2007 book *Carbon-Free, Nuclear-Free: A Roadmap to U.S. Energy Policy*, both fossil fuels and nuclear power can be completely phased out of the U.S. economy by 2040, and replaced by efficiency and renewables, without any further technological breakthroughs required, and for the same percentage of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as we currently spend on dirty, dangerous, and expensive fossil fuels and nuclear power.

The NRC downplays the risks of pool fires by assuming that surrounding populations will be successfully evacuated. But nuclear utilities are allowed to store HLRW in pools for many decades after reactors permanently shutdown, in order to defer the costs of dry cask storage as far off into the future as possible, despite the inherent risks. At the same time, NRC allows utilities, via exemptions from regulations, to do away with 10-mile radius emergency planning zones (EPZs) within as soon as 12 to 18 months post-reactor shutdown. This, despite the lingering risk of storing HLRW in pools at such shutdown reactor sites. How can populations be evacuated, if EPZs have been dismantled?!

The NRC also downplays the risks of pool fires by assuming that a pool drain down accident (or attack) involves the complete drain down of the pool. However, as environmental coalition expert witness Dr. Gordon Thompson of the Institute for Resource and Security Studies (IRSS) has pointed out, any technically competent person paying attention to the issue should have known since 1979 that a *partial* drain down of the pool is actually a worse-case scenario, for the leftover water in the bottom of the pool would block convection current air flow which would help cool the irradiated nuclear fuel, leading to faster heat up to the ignition point.

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Because when we save whales we save ourselves.

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