



# NUCLEAR SECURITY COALITION

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Alliance for Nuclear Accountability  
Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility  
C-10 Foundation  
Cape Downwinders  
Citizens Awareness Network  
Citizens Campaign for the Environment  
Citizens' Environmental Coalition  
Citizens' Regulatory Commission  
Citizens Resistance at Fermi II  
Clean Water Action  
Connecticut Coalition Against Millstone  
Earth Care  
EFMR Monitoring  
Environmental Coalition on Nuclear Power  
Finger Lakes Citizens for the Environment  
Georgians Against Nuclear Energy  
Greenpeace  
Heart of America Northwest  
Independent Environmental Conservation & Activism Network  
Institute for Resource and Security Studies  
Justice Through Peace Initiative  
Kids Against Pollution  
Lakeshore Environmental Action  
Massachusetts Citizens Awareness Network  
Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group  
Nebraskans for Peace  
New England Coalition on Nuclear Pollution  
New Jersey Public Interest Research Group  
North American Water Office  
New York Public Interest Research Group  
North Carolina Waste Awareness & Reduction Network  
Nuclear Energy Information Service  
Nuclear Free Vermont  
Nuclear Information & Resource Service  
People's Environmental Network of New York  
Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Pilgrim Watch  
Plymouth County Nuclear Information Committee  
Public Citizen  
Riverkeeper  
San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace  
Sierra Club  
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy  
Syracuse Peace Council  
Three Mile Island Alert  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
JNPLUG Salem  
Vermont Citizens Awareness Network

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Science Panel Confirms Risk to Nuclear Pools, Calls Suppression of Study Unprecedented**

#### ***Citizen Coalition Urges NRC to Release Report, Take Action***

WASHINGTON, DC – In the wake of a scandal over a National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report on security of high-level nuclear waste, the Nuclear Security Coalition, comprised of 48 grassroots and public interest groups across the U.S., called today for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to release the unclassified report as NAS has prepared it, and also to take action on a formal petition filed by the group last August to reduce the threat against 32 particularly vulnerable reactors. Those reactors, of the General Electric Mark I and Mark II design, representing nearly a third of all U.S. reactors, store their fuel in densely packed pools high above ground with no substantial protection.

**“NRC claims the waste pools aren’t vulnerable to catastrophic attacks. If that were true, then why are they holding the NAS study hostage?” asked the Nuclear Security Coalition’s Deb Katz. “We urge NRC to take action and make all waste storage facilities safer, starting with the most vulnerable.”**

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) spoke out this week regarding the Bush administration’s withholding the release of NAS’ study on risks from storing “spent” nuclear fuel rods at the nation’s power plants. In a top story in Monday’s *Washington Post*, NAS head E. William Colglazier said the science panel had never encountered such hurdles in releasing a report, and warned that the public, governors and other leaders need to learn about NAS’ findings. Experts from Princeton, MIT and elsewhere have previously identified the pools as unparalleled in terms of potential social and economic devastation should they be attacked.

Since last June, NRC has blocked release of an unclassified version of the NAS study, citing security concerns. But last week, David Lochbaum of the Union of Concerned Scientists unearthed a March

*(more)*

14<sup>th</sup> letter from NRC meant to rebut the NAS study. In the letter, NRC Chairman Nils Diaz revealed a major part of NAS' findings, showing that the science panel recommends "earlier movement of spent fuel from [cooling] pools into dry storage..." to reduce risks of a catastrophic nuclear fire.

On March 16, the Coalition charged that NRC is blocking the study's release over disagreements with the report's negative findings rather than legitimate security concerns; Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), who has seen both classified and unclassified versions of the report, echoed that concern several days later. Maintaining a public perception that nuclear waste storage can be done cheaply and safely is key to the nuclear industry's efforts to expand for the first time in over twenty-five years.

The Coalition is pressing Congress to order release of the NAS study and mandate safer storage of the highly radioactive waste, starting with the 32 GE Mark I and Mark II reactors that are most vulnerable. NSC has asked for a meeting directly with NRC's five commissioners to discuss their pending petition, after months of NRC indecision.

**"All credible science has validated our years-long insistence to lower the density of these radioactive pools,"** said NSC member Jim Warren, with the North Carolina Waste Awareness Reduction Network. **"The public is being flooded with extreme propaganda arguing that we must start building more plants. That's a different debate, and it can't come by sacrificing the urgent, prudent demand to safeguard the thousands of tons of deadly waste already on hand."**

The study has major implications for Illinois, home state of Exelon Corporation, the nation's largest utility, and 14 reactors and spent fuel pools. Five of these reactors are of the early, flawed GE design.

**"With four operating reactors within minutes of flight time to the world's busiest airport at O'Hare Field, the NRC owes it to the Governor and people of Illinois to release this critical information, the sooner the better,"** maintains David Kraft, director of the Evanston-based Nuclear Energy Information Service (NEIS), an Illinois nuclear watchdog organization.

**"At a time when Exelon Corporation is trying to revive the nuclear industry with its proposal for a new reactor at the downstate Clinton site, the NRC owes it to Illinois to make available the most complete information possible on which to judge this decision,"** Kraft asserts. **"Failure to do so will once again demonstrate that 'NRC' stands for 'Not Really Concerned' when it comes to public safety and security."**

NEIS is opposing the Exelon's attempt to get a new reactor built in Illinois, and is mobilizing opposition to confront Exelon and NRC at the scheduled April 19<sup>th</sup> public meeting in downstate Clinton.

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*To view the Nuclear Security Coalition's petition to the NRC, visit <http://www.citizen.org/documents/BWRpetitionannex.pdf>. To view the Coalition's call to release the NAS study, visit [http://www.citizen.org/cmep/energy\\_enviro\\_nuclear/nuclear\\_power\\_plants/reactor\\_safety/articles.cfm?ID=13125](http://www.citizen.org/cmep/energy_enviro_nuclear/nuclear_power_plants/reactor_safety/articles.cfm?ID=13125).*