

Action alert: RADIATION EXPOSURE RULE

CALL FOR A PUBLIC HEARING!

Reduce Radioactive Pollution!

COMMENT DEADLINE JUNE 4, 2014

You have a chance to compel the US Environmental Protection Agency to reduce the amount of radioactive exposure released by nuclear power plants across the United States. The standards for allowable radiation exposure were last modified in 1977. Now the EPA is seeking comment from the public on whether these standards should be modified.



The EPA has published an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and is seeking public input on *Environmental Radiation Protection Standards for Nuclear Power Operations*, embodied in federal regulation 40 CFR 190. The standards apply to all nuclear power operations including nuclear electric power plants and the radioactive fuel stored at plant sites.

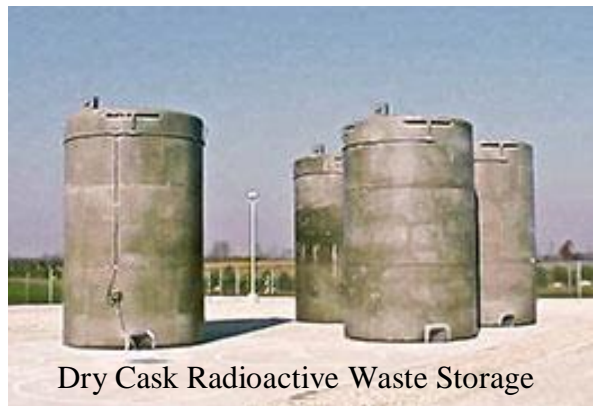
Although the standards particularly concern people living near nuclear power plants, the rule applies to routine radioactive contamination of the general environment, meaning radiation exposure to the public, caused by nuclear energy. The 1977 rule states: “The standards specify the levels below which normal operations of the uranium fuel cycle are determined to be environmentally acceptable.”

No radiation exposure is “acceptable.” Call for a public hearing!

The standards in the present rule for normal operations (40 CFR § 190.10) state that nuclear plant operators must provide only “reasonable assurance” that:

(a) The annual dose equivalent does not exceed 25 millirems to the whole body, 75 millirems to the thyroid, and 25 millirems to any other organ of any member of the public as the result of exposures to planned discharges of radioactive materials, radon and its daughters excepted, to the general environment from uranium fuel cycle operations and to radiation from these operations.

(b) The total quantity of radioactive materials entering the general environment from the entire uranium fuel cycle per gigawatt-year of electrical energy produced by the fuel cycle, contains less than 50,000 curies of krypton-85, 5 millicuries of iodine-129, and 0.5 millicuries combined of plutonium-239 and other alpha-emitting transuranic radionuclides with half-lives greater than one year.



Dry Cask Radioactive Waste Storage

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

www.BREDL.org PO Box 88 Glendale Springs, North Carolina 28629 BREDL@skybest.com (336) 982-2691

PROBLEMS WITH THE CURRENT RULE

Nuclear power plant operators measure and report the amount of radiation they release to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Risk assessments are used to estimate the exposure to the general public. Variances allow nuclear operators to exceed the



exposure standards. With no national dumpsite, radioactive waste will remain in fuel pools or dry casks at nuclear power plants far longer than was envisioned in 1977. Radiation has been linked to heart disease and other ailments in addition to cancer. **Nuclear medicine standards have reduced radiation exposure, why not power plants?**

During the last four decades, our knowledge and experience of radiation dose to human health has changed greatly. New types of nuclear power plants have been designed, introducing new risks. These and other factors have led EPA to consider whether to revise the existing radiation exposure standards.

Through June 4th the EPA is accepting public comments on exposure limits, dose calculations, release limits for radioactive substances, irradiated fuel storage, protection of water resources, and environmental standards for new uranium fuel cycle technologies. Although no new rule has been formulated, we have this opportunity to propose revisions to the current regulations and to provide information to support reduction of radiation exposure. **Now is the time to call for public hearings in reactor communities across the country!**

EPA's Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking will gather public input on the existing environmental standards for the uranium fuel cycle: "Environmental Radiation Protection Standards for Nuclear Power Operations" (40 CFR 190), which are supposed to limit radiation releases and public exposure from the normal operations of nuclear power plants and facilities which manufacture uranium fuel for generating electrical power.



Comments are due by midnight, June 4, 2014.

Comments should be identified with the docket number, EPA-HQ-OAR6201360689, and may be submitted electronically, fax or postal mail as follows:

- Internet: Go to www.regulations.gov and follow the instructions for submitting comments
- Email: a-and-r-docket@epa.gov
- Fax: (202) 566-9744
- Postal Mail, send to: EPA Docket Center, Environmental Radiation Protection Standards for Nuclear Power Operations Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking Docket, Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2013-0689, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20460. (Please include a total of two copies.)

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