



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

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NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 11th January 2012

NFLA raises concerns over the lack of information on marine radioactive discharges in the ONR 'stress test' nuclear reactors report

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) are writing to the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) over the lack of consideration in its recently published post-Fukushima 'stress tests' report of UK civil nuclear reactors in reference to marine radioactive discharges (1).

The ONR's collation of responses from UK civil nuclear reactors concludes that there are no fundamental weaknesses of such reactors following the Fukushima disaster. All civil nuclear reactors have had to undergo a series of 'stress tests', as determined by the European Commission, as a response to the potential problems raised by the Fukushima disaster.

It has been brought to the attention of the NFLA by the independent marine pollution consultant Tim Deere-Jones that there is little mention in the ONR report of marine pollution radioactive releases (2). This is despite the fact that the Fukushima incident is a particular example of one of the worst incidents of radioactivity into the marine environment of its kind.

Among the observations made by Tim Deere-Jones of the ONR report include:

- The only releases of radioactivity noted in the ONR 'stress test' report in the context of accidents is "release of radioactivity into the atmosphere" (Chapter 6.4.1 : Radioactive Releases after Loss of Containment Integrity). This is plainly a huge flaw in the context of the massive marine pollution that has arisen as a result of liquid/aqueous leaks into watercourses and the ensuing marine pollution.
- Among the main text and the recommendations, the ONR Report makes many references to ensuring the supply of Emergency Cooling Water (ECW) for reactors and spent fuel cooling ponds (SFCP) that may be undergoing LOCA.
- Among the main text and recommendations, the ONR Report makes many references to ensuring that sites can drain freely after flooding events (ingress inundations such as heavy rainfall, tsunami, storm surge etc).
- However, nowhere in the main text or recommendations of the ONR report is there any reference to the management, or behaviour and eventual fate, of USED ECW which would have gone through broken reactors/SFCP.
- The available evidence demonstrates that Emergency Cooling Water was applied to reactors and SFCP's on a daily basis, for many months, at flow rates of up to 432 tonnes per day.
- TEPCO press releases also imply that the company had managed to retain on site approximately 195,000 tonnes of highly radioactive water which had passed through shattered reactors and SFCP.
- No data has been provided for the actual (or estimated) volume of the highly radioactive water at Fukushima which had entered adjacent watercourses and the marine environment. In the absence of definitive and verified data, the NFLA conclude that the total volume of 'Highly

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Radioactive Water' discharged to the marine environment was probably several, and possibly many, hundreds of thousands of tonnes.

- It is undeniable that such water (having been applied to the molten fuel and core material of several reactors and the highly radioactive "hot" spent fuels in ruptured cooling ponds) will have become highly contaminated with the entire range of radioactivity to be found within such environments, including several isotopes of plutonium and similar substances (americium, curium etc).

The NFLA made a substantial number of detailed comments around marine pollution from the Fukushima disaster in its submission to the ONR prior to its October 2011 final report analysing the Fukushima disaster (3). It therefore is very disappointed that again marine pollution issues seem to not being given the consideration they deserve in the 'stress tests' required of civil nuclear reactor owners. This omission needs to be urgently rectified.

NFLA Chair, Councillor Brian Goodall, said:

"I am concerned that the ONR is simply not considering in any depth the marine pollution issues from the Fukushima disaster, whether in its 2011 reports or in this stress test report. I am writing to the ONR as a matter of urgency to ascertain why this is the case and asking them to make due consideration of these important omissions to the post-Fukushima safety regime. It is about time they were fully considered."

Ends

Further information - Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary 0161 234 3244 or 07771 930186.
Other groups can be contacted via the NFLA Secretary.

Notes to editors:

- (1) Office for Nuclear Regulation, UK nuclear power stress test report published, 4th January 2011. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/nuclear/news/2012/jan-stress-test-report.htm?ebul=gd-nuclear&cr=01/jan-12>
- (2) Correspondence from Tim Deere-Jones to the NFLA Secretary, 11th January 2011.
- (3) Nuclear Free Local Authorities submission to the ONR Fukushima study panel, 2nd September 2011
http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/consultations/NFLA_Weightman_submission_annex.pdf

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