

PRESS RELEASE

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Fukushima nuclear disaster turns 4; the accident continues

CHICAGO—The nuclear disaster at Fukushima enters its fourth year today, and the more things change, the more they remain the same, a local nuclear watchdog organization observes.

“We’re entering year four of a global disaster which will continue to go on for at least three more decades, and cost Japan hundreds of billions of dollars,” notes Gail Snyder, Board President of **Nuclear Energy Information Service (NEIS)**, a Chicago-based safe-energy/nuclear watchdog organization.

While costly, incremental progress is being made at Fukushima, the clean-up project remains riddled with many of the flaws and problems noted early on, and feared by both the Japanese public and international observers alike. These include:

- The ongoing dumping of radioactively contaminated water into the Pacific Ocean, and consequent contamination of fish and plant life;
- Control of the clean-up operations by Japanese mafia (yakuza) organizations, leading to poor training and contamination of workers, who are also underpaid and have few benefits or health options;
- The capitulation of government to the wishes of the Japanese nuclear industry, the legendary “Nuclear Village” of industry insiders.
- The complex, multi-layered system of awarding sub-contractor contracts to do the clean-up, which is rife with corruption;
- The weakening of radiation exposure standards for both workers and the general public; and ignoring of other contaminated prefectures besides Fukushima;
- The deliberate spreading of radioactive waste disposal and contamination across all of Japan as a matter of formal government policy;
- Continued cover-ups on the part of TEPCO with no legal consequences for their actions. Recently *Japan Times* revealed that TEPCO was knowingly discharging radioactive water containing strontium and cesium into the Pacific Ocean for the past 10 months, but did not notify anyone until caught.

“It is not acceptable that the government of Japan permits continued contamination of the Pacific Ocean without consequence,” Snyder asserts. “We are here today to inform Prime Minister Abe that these and other unacceptable actions will no longer be tolerated by the World Community. If Japan does not cease its contamination of the planet in the coming year, does not engage in responsible clean-up activities, does not engage in responsible radiation monitoring, then We, the World Community will be forced to bring formal charges against them in an appropriate world court venue,” Snyder warns.

“We will be back here next year, and every year after that. We will see progress from the Japanese government on the cleanup, or they will see consequence,” Snyder concludes.

Illinois has four reactors of the same type but older than the reactors that melted down and exploded at Fukushima in 2011. Two of these -- Quad Cities 1 & 2 -- are on the list for either corporate welfare bailout or closure via the recently introduced Exelon legislation.

A demonstration will take place outside the Japanese Consul's office in Chicago from 11 to 1 today.

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