

NUCLEAR POWER AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ISSUE

Revised July 27, 2022

- ☢ NEIS subscribes and adheres to both the Jemez Principles, and the Principles of Environmental Justice
- ☢ As a former member of the Illinois Climate Table, NEIS has worked to educate our partners on the fact that nuclear power represents a local, national and international environmental justice issue.
- ☢ NEIS has actively advocated for “just transitions” for affected nuclear power and coal communities since 2013, when we first opposed the Exelon nuclear bailouts. The affected communities and soon to be displaced nuclear and fossil fuel workers need the bailouts, not for-profit and profitable Exelon/Constellation Corporations.
- ☢ In May, 2021, the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council expressed opposition to nuclear power and waste. The Biden Administration did not accept this recommendation.
- ☢ Continued use of nuclear power means: 1.) more uranium mining, 2.) continued “allowed” and “unintentional” radioactive emissions and releases, and threats from catastrophic disasters like Chernobyl and Fukushima; and 3.) more radioactive waste produced.
- ☢ The environmental justice legacy of nuclear power has resulted in:
 - Over 10,000 abandoned and un-remediated contaminated uranium mining sites and over 250 MILLION tons of largely unremediated uranium mill tailings in the U.S., mostly on Indigenous lands.
 - Uranium mining contamination on Indigenous lands worldwide such as the Aborigines in Australia, the Cree in Canada, the Diné, Western Shoshone and Lakota in the U.S., and the Tuareg in Niger.
 - Numerous attempts by the U.S. Government to create high-level radioactive waste disposal and storage facilities on Indigenous lands, such as the Skull Valley Goshutes (failed proposal in UT, 1999-2000); and the Western Shoshone at Yucca Mt., NV (1995 to present).
 - The largest human-caused radiation spill in the history of North America at Church Rock, NM, July 16, 1979, when a uranium tailings pond burst and contaminated the Puerco River – the sole drinking water supply on Diné lands in that area – over 50 miles downstream.
 - Communities like Zion, IL instantly losing over 50% of their tax base and hundreds of jobs overnight when reactors close without a closure plan and just transitions programs being in place beforehand.
 - Current attempts by private nuclear industry concerns and their allies in the federal government to create unwanted allegedly “temporary” high-level radioactive waste dumps in West Texas (largely Hispanic communities), and southeast New Mexico.
 - Nuclear orphans, victims and *hibakusha*, like the Marshall Islanders who still have not been fully compensated by the U.S. government for the loss of their highly contaminated homelands from nuclear weapons testing.
 - Chernobyl, Fukushima, Three Mile Island, Church Rock, Kyshtym-Mayak and Chelyabinsk, Chalk River Canada, Santa Susana California, Sellafield/Windscale England, The Polygon in Kazakhstan, The Siberian Chemical Combine, and more. “As of 2014, there have been more than 100 serious nuclear accidents and incidents from the use of nuclear power. Fifty-seven accidents have occurred since the Chernobyl disaster, and about 60% of all nuclear-related accidents have occurred in the USA.” [Source: Wikipedia].
 - Nuclear reactors as accidental or deliberate targets in war zones, such as has been seen in Ukraine, and in potential future conflicts.

☢ Since 2007 NEIS has advocated for a “carbon-free/nuclear-free” U.S. energy policy to most effectively deal with climate disruption in an environmentally just manner. To rely on more nuclear power as a means of reducing coal and fossil fuel use is akin to going to a hospital to swap heart disease for cancer. It exchanges one sacrifice population for another in violation of The Principles of Environmental Justice, rather than truly addressing the problem.

☢ NEIS subscribes and adheres to the **Jemez Principles** for democratic organizing, Dec. 6-8, 1996 Jemez, NM.

- be inclusive
- emphasis on bottom up organizing reaching out to new constituencies
- let people speak for themselves
- work together in solidarity and mutuality
- build just relationships among ourselves
- commitment to self - transformation, from individualism to community centeredness.

☢ **The Principles of Environmental Justice** Oct. 24 - 27, 1991 First People of Color Environmental Leadership summit, DC.:

We, the people of color, gathered together at this multinational People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, to begin to build a national and international movement for all peoples of color to fight the destruction and taking of our lands and communities do hereby establish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of Mother Earth: to respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages, and beliefs that the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to ensure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and, to secure our political, economic, and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples, do affirm and adopt these principles of environmental justice.