

4 April 2023

The Honorable Joseph Biden  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The undersigned organizations from across the Nation write to you with grave concerns regarding security at U.S. nuclear power plants.

For a year now Ukraine and the world have lived anxiously with the threat of nuclear disaster, not only from threats of nuclear weapons use, but also from deliberate attacks on and deteriorating conditions at Ukraine's nuclear power stations such as the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. We commend and wholeheartedly support your Administration's much needed efforts to make nuclear plants in the Ukraine war zone more secure in the face of daunting political and military challenges. This work protects not only Ukraine but the entire Planet.

Our concern is that the security of U.S. nuclear power plants does not seem to be receiving a commensurate amount of attention, neither from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), nor the Administration. Worse, your Administration is also seeking to expand the nuclear industry in dangerous ways that compound nuclear plant security threats.

The \$35 million the Administration allocated last year to assist Ukraine with its nuclear plant security is a justified federal expenditure. But **nuclear plant security MUST begin at home**. The US government must learn the lesson of Zaporizhzhia -- that attacks on nuclear facilities and other external dangers they face are credible threats and could happen here -- and prioritize domestic US nuclear plant security accordingly. Meanwhile:

- The 92 operating reactors and 19 reactors in various stages of decommissioning in the US are vulnerable to sabotage, terrorism, cyberattack, dam breaches, and other threats of a deliberate nature.
- Shipments of spent nuclear fuel to consolidated interim storage facilities (CISFs) are similarly vulnerable.
- NRC nuclear plant security policy is reactive rather than proactive, leaving it up to licensees. The NRC also takes a 'hands-off' approach to securing spent nuclear fuel.
- Independent analysis shows this approach has failed, and that as a result, US nuclear plants are not secure.

A more detailed description and documentation of these concerns accompanies this letter. The recent catastrophic train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, and the crash of two Boeing 737MAX jets demonstrate the real-world consequences of inadequate or capriciously enforced safety regulation and oversight. We can't add radiological releases from US nuclear plants to this list.

In light of these concerns, the undersigned organizations, representing hundreds of thousands of members nationwide, make the following requests:

- Since independent analysis shows the failings of current nuclear plant security arrangements, your administration should bridge the gap by framing and enforcing enhanced, mandatory security measures for existing nuclear facilities and spent nuclear fuel to make them less vulnerable to attack. Cost of implementation should be borne by licensees, not the taxpayers.

- [Hardened Onsite Storage \(HOSS\)](#) of spent nuclear fuel should be adopted immediately, and transfer of spent fuel from fuel pools to fortified dry storage that meets HOSS criteria should be expedited.
- US Department of Energy (DOE) should not take title to spent nuclear fuel at civilian reactors, which would trigger thousands of vulnerable shipments of spent nuclear fuel by truck, train, and barge across the country to proposed consolidated interim storage facilities (CISFs).
- Instead of transporting it to proposed CISFs, most spent nuclear fuel should be stored at reactor sites using [Hardened Onsite Storage \(HOSS\)](#). Transfer of spent fuel from fuel pools to fortified dry storage that meets HOSS criteria should be expedited.
- Proposed CISFs would be potential targets, and also need robust, mandatory security requirements.

Increasing reliance on nuclear power will only compound security threats. Federal funding should prioritize scaling up renewables, storage, efficiency, and transmission upgrades, so as to phase out nuclear power as quickly as possible.

Representatives of the undersigned groups and independent nuclear experts are prepared to meet with representatives of your Administration to air these concerns and discuss practical ways of resolving them. Improving nuclear plant security is a vital public safety issue, and deserves a substantive dialog between your Administration and public interest groups.

We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,