

*** News from Beyond Nuclear ***
*** Citizens Environment Alliance of Southwestern Ontario ***
*** Don't Waste Michigan * Green Party of Ohio ***

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**Environmental Coalition Challenges “Radioactive Russian Roulette”
of 20 Year License Extension at Davis-Besse
*Wind and Solar Can Replace Nuclear Power,
Accident Costs Low-balled, Groups Allege***

Oak Harbor, Ohio—This week, an environmental coalition has officially intervened against the 20 year license extension sought by First Energy Nuclear Operating Company (FENOC) for its Davis-Besse atomic reactor. The groups – Beyond Nuclear, Citizens Environment Alliance of Southwestern Ontario, Don't Waste Michigan, and the Green Party of Ohio – allege that wind and solar photovoltaic (PV) power, and certainly a combination of the two renewable energies, can readily replace Davis-Besse's electricity by the end of its 40 year operating license in 2017. The intervention petition and request for a hearing to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (posted at Beyond Nuclear's homepage, www.beyondnuclear.org) also asserts that the potential casualties and costs that could be caused by a severe radioactivity release from Davis-Besse have been grossly underestimated.

Kevin Kamps of Beyond Nuclear, a party to the intervention, said “Granting Davis-Besse 20 additional years to operate would be playing radioactive Russian roulette on the Great Lakes shoreline.”

Beyond Nuclear has prepared a background summary on Davis-Besse's trouble-plagued history, including some of the closest-calls to major accidents in U.S. history. Among these were a Three Mile Island reactor meltdown precursor accident in 1977, a 1985 loss of cooling to the reactor core, a 1998 tornado strike, and the infamous 2002 hole-in-the-head reactor lid corrosion accident (a 2010 lid leak shows the problem is recurring). Each of these four incidents came unacceptably close to causing a reactor core loss-of-coolant-accident, which could have led to a full nuclear meltdown. The Davis-Besse backgrounder is posted at the Beyond Nuclear website at http://www.beyondnuclear.org/storage/Davis_Besse_Backgrounder.pdf.

The environmental intervenors' expert witness on renewable power sources, such as wind and solar PV readily replacing Davis-Besse, is Alvin D. Compaan, Ph.D., Distinguished University Professor of Physics, Emeritus, at the University of Toledo, and former Chair of UT's Physics and Astronomy Department. UT physics undergrad also Kathryn Hoepfl provided intervenors with analysis showing that a combination of wind and solar could readily replace Davis-Besse.

“The good news is that vast renewable energy sources, such as wind power and solar PV, coupled with
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energy efficiency, are ready and cost-effective today. Efficiency and renewables will benefit everyone's pocket book, health, safety, and environment, and do not risk catastrophic radioactivity releases for the sake of corporate greed," said intervenor Joe DeMare of Rossford, Ohio, a Wood County Green Party member. "Opposition to nuclear power is in keeping with the Greens' Key Principle of Ecological Wisdom," he added.

The intervention filing extensively documented the vast offshore wind power potential of Lake Erie, as well as vast on-land wind power potential in Ohio, and the ability of a combination of wind power and solar PV to readily displace Davis-Besse. An NRC ruling this week in a separate proceeding may provide a significant precedent for the Davis-Besse license extension dispute. On December 28, the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) overseeing the Calvert Cliffs Unit 3 new reactor application in Maryland ruled in favor of environmental intervenors, including Beyond Nuclear, ordering NRC staff and the nuclear utility to more realistically consider the vast potential of offshore wind power, as well as a combination of renewable energy technologies, as alternatives to nuclear power. A link to the Calvert Cliffs 3 ASLB ruling has been posted at Beyond Nuclear's website:

<http://www.beyondnuclear.org/nuclear-power/2010/12/29/nrc-licensing-board-bolsters-argument-that-renewables-can-re.html>.

The intervenors' concluding contention holds that FENOC has vastly understated the true costs that would occur in the aftermath of a catastrophic radioactivity release at Davis-Besse.

"Davis-Besse risks a Chernobyl-type nuclear catastrophe in the heart of the Great Lakes," said intervenor Derek Coronado, coordinator of the Citizens Environment Alliance of Southwestern Ontario, based in Windsor. "Its current, ongoing leaks of hazardous tritium into the watershed are bad enough, but a catastrophic radioactivity release at Davis-Besse could instantly ruin the drinking water supply for many millions of people downstream in the U.S., Canada, and numerous Native American and First Nations."

Intervenor Michael Keegan of Don't Waste Michigan in Monroe said "This radioactive rust bucket has got to go before it blows."

The NRC's 1982 report "Calculation of Reactor Accident Consequences," based on 1970 Census data, determined that a major accident at Davis-Besse could cause 10,000 fatal cancers downwind, 1,400 "peak early fatalities," 73,000 "peak early injuries," and \$84 billion in property damage in the region. Intervenors have challenged the conclusions on casualties as severe underestimates, based on population growth over the past 40 years. Adjusted for inflation, property damages would now top \$184 billion, in Year 2009 Dollars.