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## ***NRC ASLB to hear testimony and to investigate allegations on safety significant quality assurance violations at proposed Fermi 3 reactor***

Monroe, Michigan--The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) has accepted a fifth contention from an environmental coalition opposed to the proposed Fermi 3 nuclear power plant on the Lake Erie shore. The contention, based on expert testimony by nuclear engineer Arnie Gundersen as well as internal NRC emails and notices of violation, illuminates widespread quality assurance violations of serious safety significance undermining Detroit Edison's combined Construction and Operating License Application (COLA) for the proposed Fermi 3.

The ASLB has declined to hear quality assurance inadequacies with regards to the Hitachi-General Electric "Economic Simplified Boiling Water Reactor" (ESBWR) as this is beyond the scope of the ASLB mandate. Those quality assurance inadequacies must be dealt with in the reactor design review, which is a separate process. The ASLB ruling, as well as Gundersen's affidavits, are posted at Beyond Nuclear's website.

<http://www.beyondnuclear.org/home/2010/6/16/quality-assurance-contention-against-fermi-3-new-reactor-acc.html>

"Quality assurance requires high-grade components and building practices, and is essential for ensuring the safety of this potentially catastrophic electricity source," said Terry Lodge of Toledo, the environmental coalition's attorney. "Indifference to quality assurance has led to such catastrophes as the Gulf of Mexico oil disaster, Space Shuttles and airplanes crashing to the ground, and has already played into nuclear near-misses, as at Davis-Besse, Three Mile Island, and Fermi 1,"

"If not adequately addressed from the outset, quality assurance violations set the stage for massive cost overruns during reactor construction, and possible failure of safety significant equipment and structures, endangering public safety, health, and the environment," said Arnie Gundersen, chief engineer at Fairewinds Associates and expert witness for the environmental intervenors regarding the proposed Fermi 3.

"Detroit Edison has a long history of quality assurance failures at both Fermi 1, which suffered a nearly catastrophic reactor core meltdown in 1966, and at Fermi 2, which blew apart Christmas 1993 as a result of unresolved known vibrations in the turbine. These QA inadequacies haunt the Fermi 2 to this day," said Michael Keegan of Don't Waste Michigan.

The other contentions granted hearings thus far relate to lack of disposal options for Fermi 3's radioactive wastes, harmful impacts on already endangered species at the site, radiological risks to area drinking water supplies, and thermal and chemical discharges into Lake Erie worsening harmful algal blooms. Of six ESBWRs originally proposed across the U.S., Fermi 3 is the last such proposal remaining; other nuclear utilities have abandoned the troubled ESBWR design, changing their new reactor proposals to other designs. The coalition challenging the proposed Fermi 3 includes Beyond Nuclear, Citizens for Alternatives to Chemical Contamination, Citizens Environment Alliance of Southwestern Ontario, Don't Waste Michigan, the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter, and numerous local concerned citizens.