

June 5, 2021

Consulate General of Japan in New York
The Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

To Mark World Environment Day (June 5) and World Ocean Day (June 8)

Dear Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry,

We, the undersigned, are groups in the United States. We are sending this letter to strongly condemn the recent decision of the Japanese government to release approximately 1.25 million metric tons of radioactive water from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the Pacific Ocean. We would greatly appreciate it if you could share this letter with the leadership of the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo.

We are very concerned that Hitachi's Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS) cannot remove all radioactive materials before the dumping, as the Japanese government has repeatedly admitted. The contaminated water stored at the Fukushima Daiichi is fundamentally different from the water coming from a nuclear power plant during a regular operation.

The contaminated water at the Fukushima Daiichi is highly radioactive because it was used to cool the highly radioactive melted core of at least four nuclear reactors of the crippled plant that had meltdowns caused by the loss of cooling capability in March 2011. Due to the ongoing high radiation dose at the facility – as high as 42 Sv/h in a reactor containment vessel that could kill a person instantly in addition to 5150 mSv/h in the reactor buildings - the radioactive water accumulated in the Fukushima Daiichi contains an extremely high level of radioactivity.^{1 2} Radioactive isotopes, such as tritium (H-3) and carbon-14 cannot be isolated from water at all by the ALPS.^{3 4} Radioactive iodine, ruthenium, strontium, and other radioactive isotopes may also remain in the water after being processed by the ALPS.

Last month, three independent human rights experts appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council expressed deep regret at the decision of Japan in a joint statement, saying that the “decision is particularly disappointing as experts believe alternative solutions to the problem are available.”⁵ They expressed their concerns that the dumping of radioactive water from the Fukushima Daiichi “could impact millions of lives and livelihoods in the Pacific region,” and such dumping “imposes considerable risks to the full enjoyment of human rights of concerned populations in and beyond the borders of Japan,” and “reminded Japan of its international obligations to prevent exposure to hazardous substances, to conduct environmental impact

¹ <https://mainichi.jp/articles/20190228/k00/00m/040/233000c>

² https://www.tepco.co.jp/en/nu/fukushima-np/f1/images/f12np-gaiyou_e_3.pdf

³ <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20210413/p2g/00m/0na/031000c>

⁴ <https://read.fulmina.org/en/read/38-fukushima-radioactive-carbon-14-investigation-by-greenpeace>

⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27000&LangID=E>

assessments of the risks that the discharge of water may have, to prevent transboundary environmental harms, and to protect the marine environment.”⁶

We join international calls for the Japanese government to halt its decision to dump radioactive water into the Pacific Ocean. We also request the government to explore alternative safer options of long-term storage at the Fukushima Daiichi or near the site to minimize the health impacts on people and all living things. Such measures will also protect the environment of the Pacific Ocean.

Plans to dilute the radioactive water do not change the quantity of radioactivity that Japan will dump into the Pacific Ocean. Such radioactivity could accumulate in parts of the marine environment and living organisms through bioaccumulation.

We are also concerned about the long-term impacts on the wide Pacific region from the dumping of such a large amount of radioactive water. The Pacific Ocean accounts for a large percentage of the world's fisheries, and many of the communities in the region are dependent on these resources. In addition, many of the states in the Pacific have long suffered from the effects of nuclear testing and illicit dumping of radioactive waste by wealthy nations. We must not forget that these communities have still been living with the threats of remaining contamination exposure, decimated environments, and generational trauma from nuclear testing.

The dumping of radioactive water into the Pacific is also a violation of international law. The Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter of 1972 and the London Protocol prohibit dumping of any concentration of radioactive material into the sea.

Fukushima agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and consumer cooperatives strongly oppose the plan of Japan to dump radioactive water into the Pacific. Recently they issued a joint statement regretting that the government has made such an important decision on April 13 without their consent. They emphasized that they will continue to oppose such a decision to the ocean dumping until they were convinced that “not only the fishermen but also the international community and the people of Japan will be able to understand and formulate public opinion in a sincere manner.”⁷ According to a survey by Friends of the Earth Japan to fisheries cooperatives in the six prefectures of Iwate, Miyagi, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Chiba, and Tokyo, almost all cooperatives also opposed the idea of ocean dumping.⁸

There are alternative options as solutions suggested by Japanese civil society groups, engineers, and researchers. These alternatives include existing technologies such as building large tanks at the site of TEPCO.⁹ We were disappointed to learn that these alternatives and suggestions were not even discussed or taken into account.

⁶ Id.

⁷ <http://nonukesasiaforum.org/japan/archives/2154>

⁸ <https://311mieruka.jp/info/en/mieruka-facts/fact-16/>

⁹ <https://www.foejapan.org/en/energy/doc/210413.html>

We, the undersigned, call on the Japanese government to:

1. Withdraw its plan to release radioactive water from the Fukushima Daiichi site into the Pacific Ocean.
2. Listen to the firm opposing voices from cooperative organizations of agriculture, forestry, and fishery businesses and consumers in Fukushima, neighboring prefectures, and concerned groups in the international communities.
3. Stop the repeated use of misleading phrases such as “treated water” or “ALPS treated water” to describe the radioactive water processed by the ALPS. Such water still contains a large amount of radioactive tritium (H-3) and carbon-14, in addition to other radioactive isotopes, such as strontium-90 that could accumulate in bones and cause bone cancer and leukemia.
4. Consider and explore alternative options - such as building large tanks using existing technologies - proposed by the local communities and civil society groups as alternative solutions to this grave issue.
5. Understand your responsibility to properly educate the international community that radioactive isotopes such as tritium and carbon-14 from the crippled nuclear power plant cannot be isolated from contaminated water at all by the ALPS or any other known technologies. Such radioactivity will remain in the radioactive water that Japan will dump into the Pacific Ocean for the next 30 to 40 years.
6. Acknowledge that characterization of tritium as harmless is reckless and counter to the science. Tritium is clinically shown to be more effective at damaging and destroying living cells than gamma rays.¹⁰ Numerous studies indicate that tritium can produce typical radiogenic impacts including cancer, genetic effects, developmental abnormalities and reproductive effects.¹¹ Tritium can cause mutations, tumors and cell death.¹² Studies also indicate that lower doses of tritium can cause more cell death, mutations, and chromosome damage per dose than higher tritium doses.¹³
7. Ensure transparency and protect the right to information by promptly publishing all relevant data and information, both in Japanese and English, regarding the ongoing issues relating to the radioactive water accumulated in the crippled nuclear power plant.

¹⁰

http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/356082/6590573/1271634765367/LeakFirst_FixLater_BeyondNuclear_April182010_FINAL.pdf?token=feLszNy5SIZTvzMOiPdCImZ1h%2Fw%3D

¹¹

<http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/356082/6736687/1272554001127/Tritiumbasicinfofinal.pdf?token=SxdS4hntm2CjyrYcDNSH0sfpxBY%3D>

¹² Id.

¹³ Id.

8. Conduct regular public hearings and guarantee the participation of residents, mothers, farmers, fishermen, representatives of civil society groups, and third-party experts independent from the nuclear industry in the decision-making processes related to these issues.

Sincerely,

Manhattan Project for a Nuclear-Free World
Alliance for a Green Economy
Alliance for Environmental Strategies
Beyond Nuclear
Brooklyn For Peace
Buckeye Environmental Network
Citizens Resistance at Fermi Two (CRAFT)
Climate Crisis Policy
Coalition Against Nukes
Coalition for a Nuclear Free Great Lakes
CodePINK San Francisco Bay Area (Golden Gate) Chapter
Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety
Consequences of Radiation Exposure (CORE)
Don't Waste Arizona
Don't Waste Michigan
Eco-Logic, WBAI-FM
Ecological Options Network, EON
Environmental Justice Taskforce of the WNY Peace Center
Environmentalists Against War
Fukushima Fallout Awareness Network
Fukushima Response
Gender and Radiation Impact Project
Georgia Women's Action for New Directions
Granny Peace Brigade NYC
Green State Solutions
Heart of America NW
Heiwa Peace and Reconciliation Foundation of New York
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater
Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment
New Jersey Peace Action
New York Association for Gender Rights Advocacy (NYAGRA)
Nevada Nuclear Waste Task Force
Nuclear Energy Information Service
Nuclear Hotseat
Nuclear Information and Resource Service
Nukewatch

NYC Safe Energy Campaign
Occupy Bergen County (New Jersey)
On Behalf of Planet Earth
Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility
Peace Action Maine
Peace Action New York State
Peace Resource Center at Wilmington College
Proposition One Campaign for a Nuclear-Free Future
Reverse the Trend: Save Our People, Save Our Planet
RootsAction.org
Safe Energy Rights Group (SEnRG)
Samuel Lawrence Foundation
Snake River Alliance
San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility
San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace
South Country Peace Group
Stand with Okinawa NY
Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion (SAPE)
Sustainable Energy & Economic Development (SEED) Coalition
Syracuse Peace Council
The Carrie Dickerson Foundation
The Dubuque International Day of Peace
The Ribbon International
Traprock Center for Peace and Justice
United for Peace and Justice
Vermont Yankee Decommissioning Alliance
Veterans For Peace Chapter 9
Veterans For Peace Chapter 34
Veterans For Peace Nuclear Abolition Working Group
Voices for a Sustainable Future
Westchester Black Women's Political Caucus, Inc.
Western States Legal Foundation
Work That Reconnects
World BEYOND War