

DECOMMISSION PALISADES

The Palisades Nuclear Plant bordering Michigan's Van Buren State Park squats menacingly between high sand dunes and pristine Lake Michigan waves. Palisades rates as one of the three most dangerous nuclear plants in the US (120 total nuclear plants). In the past two years Palisades has suffered over two dozen serious breaches of safety protocol, and seven complete shutdowns. A catastrophe at Palisades could kill tens of thousands of people and destroy more than \$116 Billion in property.

How could the Nuclear Regulatory Commission need more evidence for the decommissioning Palisades? Is there a reason why more than half the serious accidents at nuclear facilities world-wide have occurred in the U.S? The General Accounting Office, Office of the Inspector General and the Union of Concerned Scientists all find the NRC's "enforcement of existing regulations inadequate." Does the NRC regulate the nuclear industry, or promote it? An independent inspection team, Conyer-Elsea, found "a lack of accountability at all levels at Palisades." Is the NRC waiting for Chernobyl 2?

A true story, this past August, an electrician, working a 25- hour shift, changed a lightbulb, shorted out a circuit breakers, then shorted out one- half of all the control systems at Palisades. The only good news was that the worker was not electrocuted, and luckily the default emergency cooling systems designed to engage in just such an emergency...failed to work! Otherwise the thermal shock could have ruptured the pressure vessel. Palisades' pressure vessel is the most brittle in the U.S. A ruptured pressure vessel at Palisades would be apocalyptic. . Yet, ENTERGY failed to notify the NRC within eight hours of the accident, a serious violation.

Former CMS chief executive, David Joos, said it best back in 2005 when CMS sold Palisades to ENTERGY. "Ownership of a nuclear plant entails considerable risk." Not to mention cost, as CMS faced \$600 million in repairs before ENTERGY

acquired Palisades. Since then ENTERGY has failed to make those required capital outlays, depending on the NRC to weaken safety standards.

According to a safety culture assessment this year, 74% of Palisade workers feared retaliation for reporting safety concerns. The safety culture at Palisades has collapsed.

Congressman Fred Upton, R. Kalamazoo, said he “supports removing subsidies from all energy companies”. If so, he should start with the nuclear power in his district. The federal government subsidizes the nuclear industry more than any other. The Union of Concerned Scientists calculates that it would be cheaper for the federal government to purchase electricity and give it away than to subsidize nuclear power!

Nor are we any closer to solving that radio active waste equation. All the radio active waste since 1954 is still stored on site, in pools of water, and in dry casts. At Palisades, hundreds of tons of nuclear waste are stored within 200 yards of Lake Michigan. Palisades’ radio-active waste will be toxic for 1 million years!

It is time to de-commission the crumbling Palisades nuclear facility. De-commissioning will take a decade, and employ thousands of workers. It will also cost \$1 Billion. The electricity it generates can be made up with efficiencies. ENTERGY operates six of the oldest most poorly maintained nuclear plants in the county. The NRC should hold ENTERGY to a stricter standard of safety not a more relaxed standard. NRC should begin the decommissioning of Palisades.

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