

NEWS FROM BEYOND NUCLEAR

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Cancer study at 7 US nuclear sites must be fully independent and transparent Prior evidence suggests strong need for health investigation at nuclear facilities

Takoma Park, MD - A study looking at cancer incidence at seven US nuclear sites must be conducted independently and with full scientific integrity, urged Beyond Nuclear today, an organization that supports a full phaseout of nuclear energy.

The US Nuclear Regulatory Commission earlier this week announced that the second phase of a proposed study looking at cancers around US nuclear facilities would move forward. The study is under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences. Phase I of the report established the study protocols. Phase II will look at seven pilot sites - San Onofre, CA; Millstone and Haddam Neck, CT; Dresden, IL; Oyster Creek, NJ; Nuclear Fuel Services, Erwin, TN; and Big Rock Point, MI. The final phase could expand to multiple US nuclear sites.

“Nuclear industry efforts to dismiss the study before it even begins are very telling,” said Cindy Folkers, Radiation and Health Specialist at Beyond Nuclear. “There is already strong evidence for serious health concerns around many of these sites which the nuclear industry doubtless wants to keep under wraps. Studies in Europe have shown increased risk of childhood leukemia around nuclear facilities. We need to let the health data tell us what the effects are, not the nuclear industry,” Folkers concluded.

Families living around the Dresden, IL reactor have raised concerns about unexplained high rates of brain cancer in children. Oyster Creek, the country’s oldest operating nuclear power plant in Lacey Township, New Jersey, has a history of large, long-lived and cumulative air borne radiation releases to downwind communities including in 1979 when the single unit reactor is documented to have released [more than 1 million curies](#).

“It will be critical that this study be fully independent and not rely on industry-collected data,” said Paul Gunter, Director of Reactor Oversight at Beyond Nuclear and an NRC watchdog. “This must be an open and transparent process accessible to the public. We will be monitoring every step of the study to ensure that those conducting it are without industry ties and that the communities affected are kept informed and their concerns are answered,” Gunter concluded.

Phase I of the National Academy report, *Analysis of Cancer Risk in Populations near Nuclear Facilities*, released on April 1, 2012, suggested a number of approaches, including two epidemiology study types, that could be used to assess the risk of cancer among people living near nuclear facilities. One of these study types, called case-control, is very similar in basic design to a number of studies conducted recently in [France](#) and [Germany](#) which show increases in childhood leukemia around nuclear power facilities.

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Beyond Nuclear works to end nuclear power and nuclear weapons. With a strongly rooted commitment to citizen action - and in the wake of the devastating Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan - Beyond Nuclear is helping to educate and mobilize grassroots communities around the country to shut US nuclear reactors. More at www.beyondnuclear.org.