



2020 IN REVIEW

A difficult year

Cancer Study

In 2020 we began efforts to revive a national cancer study to look at the health impacts on children, in particular, living near US nuclear power plants. The NRC had canceled an earlier cancer study, citing expense and lack of time. But understanding the health implications of living near reactors is a human right, one we continue to fight for as we demand a new, independent study outside the purview of this conflicted federal agency.

The Update

Beyond Nuclear began its own (mostly) weekly video news report on YouTube, updating our audiences on the latest breaking stories and offering lively commentary, provoking plenty of dialogue.

The Uranium Atlas

With the Nuclear Free Future Foundation, Beyond Nuclear helped edit and distribute the comprehensive new *Uranium Atlas*, mapping the uranium impact story around the world, with a special focus on harm to Indigenous peoples.



The challenge of COVID-19

Our hearts went out to all those who suffered from the impact of COVID-19, from the disease itself, and from the losses and hardships it caused. And we reacted with outrage in opeds, press releases and media appearances when we saw the regulator and industry use the pandemic to extend work hours for reactor operators and security, and reduce reactor inspections and repairs. At the same time, thousands of asymptomatic refueling workers traveled to reactor sites and mingled in local communities, further jeopardizing safety. Inevitably, this resulted in coronavirus hotspots, most notably at Fermi-2, MI, where refueling had to be halted. It was another instance of the NRC putting safety second and industry profit margins first, even as nuclear power becomes ever more uneconomical while renewables soar and costs plummet.

Blocking bad nuclear waste dumps

The arduous battle to block the environmentally unjust proposed reactor waste dumps at two outdoor sites – in New Mexico and Texas – continued. The year began with a big push on Capitol Hill with more than three dozen meetings before the pandemic-forced shutdown. After contesting these illegal dumps – known as Consolidated Interim Storage Facilities – through NRC channels, we will now take the case to the DC Circuit Court of Appeals. Neither community has consented to host the dumps, which violate not only laws, but basic civil rights. We welcomed opposition from New Mexico's Congressional delegation and are heartened by the nomination of Native American Congresswoman, Deb Haaland (D-NM), to the job of Secretary of the Interior.

Webinars galore

We all became “zoom-proficient” this past year and participated in and hosted numerous stimulating discussions, and policy- scientific- and culturally-focused events on line. These included a packed post-screening discussion around the Cuban feature film about Chernobyl children, to the fallacies of small modular reactors, the disproportionate impact of radiation exposure on women and children, and more. We welcomed the chance to reach far larger audiences than is possible in person.

Outrage in Ohio

Beyond Nuclear dug deeply into – and wrote about for *Counterpunch* – the scandal around a corrupt state bill that awarded \$1.5 billion in subsidies to Ohio nuclear plants. The plot quickly unraveled, aided by an FBI investigation, and turned into a ripple effect as we also saw nuclear executives and politicians implicated in similar bribery and corruption scandals in South Carolina and Illinois.

Some welcome wins!

The Indian Point 2 reactor closed in April 2020. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons received 50 ratifications, allowing it to become law. And the Saugeen Ojibwe Nation in Canada defeated two nuclear dumps.

Burying the evidence

Beyond Nuclear is campaigning to get decommissioning reactors “autopsied” – the harvesting of aged materials from critical safety components – for the science that can reveal degraded conditions in operating reactors now seeking license extensions out to 80 years. A national laboratory report, which Beyond Nuclear downloaded, corroborated this argument. But when we flagged the report’s recommendation to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the agency quickly removed it from three government websites. When the NRC later republished the report, it was easy to see that scores of references to critical knowledge “gaps” in understanding reactor aging had been removed. Through FOIA, we then uncovered a specific recommendation to “scrub” the report of references to those “gaps”, clearly designed to avoid the costly “autopsies”. This is now made worse by the revelation that the NRC is considering extending reactor licenses that would see plants run for 100 years, well past the 40-year lifespan they were designed for, which is of course already 40 years too long. We continue to push for autopsies even as the NRC is apparently quite happy to let reactors run for a century while censoring scientific reports that insist autopsies are essential.

Two new handbooks



Beyond Nuclear published two new handbooks: *Nuclear power and harm to animals, wild and domestic*; and *The U.S. Space Force and the dangers of nuclear power and nuclear war in space*. These were distributed widely and were used as source information for articles, podcasts and webinars. The handbooks are found on our Beyond Nuclear International website, where our articles endeavor to pay special attention to the stories of those less often heard, especially Indigenous peoples and communities of color.



We published one such article by Ian Zabarte, Principle Man of the Western Bands of the Shoshone Nation of Indians. Zabarte also received our 2020 Judith Johnsrud Unsung Hero Award, given under the auspices of the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability, of which Beyond Nuclear is a member.