



NEWS FROM BEYOND NUCLEAR

For immediate release

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Ocean and environmental groups call on Japan not to dump radioactive water into the Pacific Ocean **“The time for using world oceans as a dump is over”**

TAKOMA PARK, MD, August 30, 2017 — Beyond Nuclear has signed onto a [new letter](#) from marine wildlife, environmental and conservation groups calling on authorities in Japan to avoid at all cost the dumping of hundreds and thousands of tons of radioactively contaminated water into the Pacific Ocean.

Currently, Japanese utility, TEPCO, is planning to release 777,000 tons of waste containing [radioactive tritium](#) into the Pacific Ocean from its stricken Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear site. The contaminated water, used to cool the destroyed reactors to avoid further catastrophe, has been stored in tanks on site, but the facility is running out of space.

The groups urge TEPCO and the Japanese nuclear regulator to find alternatives to once again using our oceans as an irresponsible dumping ground for man-made garbage. Environmental and anti-nuclear groups, along with local Japanese fishermen, have also been calling for TEPCO not to dump the radioactive water into the ocean.

“The time for using world oceans as a dump is over,” reads the letter. To date, the groups include: Turtle Island Restoration Network; WildEarth Guardians; Beyond Nuclear; Endangered Species Coalition; Klamath Forest Alliance; Environmental Protection Information Center; WILDCOAST; Ocean Defenders Alliance; Kurmalliance; Pacific Marine Mammal Center; World Ocean Observatory; Ocean Institute; and Elders Climate Action. The groups are encouraging other organizations to sign on before the letter is submitted on September 3rd.

“In the past, communities around the world used the ocean for waste disposal, including the disposal of chemical and industrial wastes, radioactive wastes, trash, munitions, sewage sludge, and contaminated dredged material. Little attention was given to the negative impacts of waste disposal on the marine environment,” the letter continues. “Wastes were frequently dumped in coastal and ocean waters based on the assumption that marine waters had an unlimited capacity to mix and disperse wastes.”

Anti-nuclear campaigner, Aileen Mioko Smith of [Green Action](#) Japan, pointed out in July that the decision to dump the radioactive water "sets a precedent that can be copied, essentially permitting anyone to dump nuclear waste into our seas." In the six years since the accident, authorities should have figured out an alternative, she said.

Already, "hundreds of thousands of sea turtles, whales, and other marine mammals, and more than 1 million seabirds die each year from ocean pollution and ingestion or entanglement in marine debris," according to the non-profit, [SEE Turtles](#).

In a [landmark 2001 report](#), authors Linda Pentz Gunter and Paul Gunter, now with Beyond Nuclear, studied the impact of just the routine operation of coastal nuclear power plants on marine life. The report — *Licensed to Kill; how the nuclear power industry destroys endangered marine wildlife and ocean habitat to save money* — found that hundreds of endangered sea turtles, among many other animals, were drawn into nuclear plant systems, and often injured or killed. Hot water discharges from nuclear plants had severely damaged marine life and ecosystems.

"We can no longer bury our industrial crimes at sea," said Linda Pentz Gunter, the international specialist at Beyond Nuclear. "We already know too much about the harm radiation exposure does to humans and wildlife. We continue to view the oceans and their important marine life as 'out of sight and out of mind' at our peril."

Marine wildlife is already under siege from horrific accumulations of dangerous debris in the world's oceans, including the notorious "Great Pacific Garbage Patch" — a 3-5 million ton accumulation of trash that covers an area approximately the size of Texas and which could double in size in the next 5 years.

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Beyond Nuclear aims to educate and activate the public about the connections between nuclear power and nuclear weapons and the need to abandon both to safeguard our future. Beyond Nuclear advocates for an energy future that is sustainable, benign and democratic. The Beyond Nuclear team works with diverse partners and allies to provide the public, government officials, and the media with the critical information necessary to move humanity toward a world beyond nuclear. Beyond Nuclear: 6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 400, Takoma Park, MD 20912. Info@beyondnuclear.org. www.beyondnuclear.org.