

News from The C-10 Research and Education Foundation, Inc.
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**National Coalition Urges NRC to Better Safeguard
Radioactive Wastes at Atomic Reactors**
Petitioners Cite Grave Risks of Attacks, Accidents, and Leaks

Newburyport, Ma.—A coalition of 32 national and grassroots environmental and safe energy organizations has filed an official petition for rulemaking with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) urging safety and security upgrades on high-level radioactive waste containers. The petitioners include such national groups as Beyond Nuclear, Alliance for Nuclear Accountability, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and Public Citizen, as well as two dozen grassroots groups across the country. They call upon NRC to strengthen quality assurance rules on the design and manufacture of dry storage casks. These outdoor concrete and steel silos are used at most atomic reactors across the country to store irradiated nuclear fuel. The groups cite the risks of disastrous radioactivity releases into the air, soil, and water due to accidents, attacks, or eventual leakage, and demand that safeguards be strengthened. The petition is posted at the C-10 Foundation homepage www.C-10.org.

The petition for rulemaking was initiated by C-10 Foundation, a watchdog group based in Newburyport, Massachusetts within ten miles of New Hampshire's Seabrook nuclear power plant. Recently the NRC approved Seabrook owner Florida Power and Light's request to install dry cask storage. However, C-10's research indicates that the NRC regulations for the design, construction, and certification of dry storage casks are woefully inadequate.

"NRC continues to certify casks based on technical design criteria for a twenty year deployment, when in fact they will actually store high-level radioactive waste on-site at reactors indefinitely, many decades into the future," said Sandra Gavutis, Executive Director of the C-10 Foundation. "More disturbing, after nuclear industry quality assurance auditors and NRC dry cask storage inspectors identify violations, the NRC continues to rubberstamp approvals despite the questionable integrity of these containers", she added.

The 103 operating atomic reactors across the U.S. each generate 20 to 30 tons of irradiated nuclear fuel each year. 60,000 tons have accumulated thus far in the U.S. As nearly 80 atomic reactors' indoor waste storage pools have filled to capacity, nuclear utilities have turned to outdoor dry cask storage. Over two dozen permanently shut down, and even several completely dismantled nuclear power plants, still store the high-level radioactive wastes they generated on-site in dry storage casks, since the U.S. lacks a

national repository. Each dry cask contains over 200 times the long-lasting radioactivity released by the Hiroshima atomic bomb.

NRC estimates that by 2015, almost all operating reactors will have established dry cask storage. Without a national repository, states will inherit the responsibility to contain the radiation and shield the public from exposure indefinitely.