

Nuclear Disaster Threat to Windsor Essex Overlooked by Province

June 12, 2017 (Windsor) - The Ontario government has been neglecting its responsibility to protect residents of Windsor and Essex County from an accident at nuclear reactors in neighbouring American states, say environmental groups.

“We live in the shadow of American nuclear reactors and so far the provincial government isn’t adequately protecting public safety in Southwestern Ontario,” said Derek Coronado, Executive Director of the Citizens Environment Alliance of Southwestern Ontario.

Residents of Windsor and Essex County live within one hundred kilometers of the Michigan-based Fermi and Ohio-based Davis-Besse nuclear stations and could be harmed in the event of a major nuclear accident.

The groups are concerned by a Discussion Paper published by the Ontario government last month that recommends against strengthening public safety and nuclear emergency preparedness in response to the Fukushima disaster.

The Discussion Paper pays little attention to public safety in Windsor and Essex, omitting risk analysis and recommendations on emergency measures provided for Ontario communities near U.S.-based reactors.

The groups say the province has also dragged its feet on distributing potassium iodide (KI) pills in Southwestern Ontario, which protect people from thyroid cancer in the event of a nuclear accident. The pills were delivered to over 200,000 Ontarians living near Ontario-based reactors in 2015 and are available free-of-charge to anyone living in the Greater Toronto Area.

“The province has been giving short shrift to public safety in Southwestern Ontario. This needs to change in light of the Fukushima nuclear accident,” said Shawn-Patrick Stensil, a Senior Energy Analyst with Greenpeace Canada.

Over 40 public interest organizations recently released a position paper calling on the Ontario government to fill gaps and fix flaws in Ontario's nuclear emergency plans that leave Ontarians vulnerable in the event of a nuclear accident on the Great Lakes.

"Nuclear emergency preparedness needs to be increased across Ontario so families and communities are properly protected in the event of a nuclear accident at any of the twenty reactors on the Great Lakes," said Theresa McClenaghan, Executive Director of the Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA).

The groups are asking the province to prepare for worst-case accidents, expand emergency preparedness zones, meet international best practices for emergency response and establish new measures to protect drinking water in the event of a nuclear accident. The government is accepting comments on its Discussion Paper until July 14th.

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A copy of the civil society position paper can be found [here](#).

The government’s Discussion Paper is available [here](#).