

Kriss Worthington

Councilmember, City of Berkeley, District 7

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ACTION CALENDAR

December 17, 2013

(Continued from December 3, 2013)

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Subject: Reduce Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Dangers

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution urging the United Nations to form an International Independent Commission of Experts (IICE) to formulate a plan to reduce the radiation being released from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, and instructing the City's Health Department to research and inform the public regarding elevated risk from seafood and other Pacific basin products, and to educate the population of Berkeley regarding specific treatments for radiation exposure and have in place emergency procedures to administer treatment, if necessary, to mitigate radiation exposure.

Copies of the resolution to be sent to the U.N. General Assembly, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Power President Barack Obama Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Barbara Boxer, Congresswoman and Representative to the 68th Session of the U.N. General Assembly Barbara Lee, and Governor Jerry Brown.

BACKGROUND

The March 11 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami crippled the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. The meltdown of three of its reactors led to the release of large amounts of radiation. Nearly three years after the disaster, radiation continues to be released from the plant. Storage tanks holding contaminated water have major leaks, releasing up to 300 tons of radioactive water a day. The Bay Area is situated directly east of Fukushima, causing radiation from the disaster to be detected in the region.

The radiation has raised concerns over contaminated food, whether it is fish in the ocean or food grown in the soil. The biodiversity of the Pacific Ocean is at risk if radiation continues to be released at its current alarming rate. This leads to the proliferation of radiation in the food chain, eventually exposing humans.

The Peace and Justice Commission unanimously approved (9-0-0) of a Resolution to be presented to the City Council. In it, they urge that the United Nations create a commission that focuses on finding ways to reducing radiation being released from Fukushima Daiichi. Finding a long term solution to end the leakage of radiation is needed to protect the environment and health.

FISCAL IMPACTS

None.

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Kriss Worthington 981-7170

Stefan Elgstrand, Intern 981-7170

Attachment:

1. Resolution to Reduce Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Dangers

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

REDUCE FUKUSHIMA DAIICHI NUCLEAR DANGERS

WHEREAS, the people of Berkeley voted overwhelmingly for the Nuclear Free Berkeley Act; and

WHEREAS, a coalition of seventy-two organizations, joined by Hiroaki Koide of Kyoto University Nuclear Reactor Research Institute, former United Nations (U.N.) diplomat Akio Matsumura, former senior adviser to the United States (U.S.) Secretary of Energy Robert Alvarez, former nuclear plant engineer Masashi Goto, etc., requested that the U.N. organize an independent assessment team and international assistance, stating that it is “imperative for the Japanese government and the international community to work together on this crisis before it becomes too late. We are appealing to the United Nations to help Japan and the planet in order to prevent the irreversible consequences of a catastrophe that could affect generations to come;” and

WHEREAS, after visiting the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant on 6 April 2012, U.S. Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR), a senior member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources who is highly experienced with nuclear waste storage issues, commented, “What we learned the first time is that radioactivity leaks out quickly. If (No.4) ruptures now, it gets into the air....This must not happen,” and “The precarious status of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear units and the risk presented by the enormous inventory of radioactive materials and spent fuel in the event of further earthquake threats should be of concern to all;” and

WHEREAS, the nuclear reactors are located in a highly active seismic zone where an earthquake is likely to further compromise the structural integrity of damaged buildings and equipment, the melted reactor cores and fuel rods require constant cooling, and a meltdown in a spent fuel pool would release unprecedented amounts of radioactivity into the global atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, over 300 tons of radioactive water have been discharged every day into the Pacific Ocean since the 2011 catastrophe, readings of marine life in the Western Pacific and elsewhere have indicated increased radioactivity, a much more highly radioactive 300 ton leak occurred in 2013 from a poorly constructed storage tank, and according to nuclear expert Mycle Schneider in August 2013, “It is leaking out from the basements, it is leaking out from the cracks all over the place. It is much worse than we have been led to believe;” and

WHEREAS, this radioactive contamination will be carried by the jet stream and spread by ocean currents to all parts of the world, adversely affecting marine life as well as human populations, and much greater contamination is likely given that the reactor cores are highly unstable and that the structures and storage tanks are deteriorating; and

WHEREAS, this disaster presents one of the gravest threats and greatest technological challenges ever to face our species, and as such demands an international response

utilizing the world's most accomplished experts as well as international funding on a level commensurate with humankind's most ambitious efforts, in the interest of every nation; and

WHEREAS, an industry that minimizes the severity of the disaster will not resolve it responsibly and, therefore, independent expertise and innovative thinking are fundamental requirements for remediation; and

WHEREAS, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights established the rights to life and of children to special protection; and

WHEREAS, the U.N. has a duty to act decisively when people's collective human rights, basic livelihood, environmental security, and right to know are being jeopardized.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley urge that the U.N. General Assembly:

1. Appoint on an emergency basis, within thirty days, an International Independent Commission of Experts (IICE) charged with formulating a plan to reduce, to every extent possible, releases of Fukushima Daiichi radiation into the atmosphere and the ocean, drawing personnel from universities, national research laboratories, other public institutions and nonprofit NGO's in order to avoid conflicts of interest and to ensure adherence to the purpose of the IICE, and insisting on transparency for investigatory, planning and implementation phases of remediation, ensuring that the project plans will be meticulously assessed, critiqued and optimized;
2. Empower the IICE, with the intention of accurately assessing risks and formulating viable solutions, to investigate the site with the cooperation of the Government of Japan, including full access to the site, to relevant government documents and staff, and to personnel and documents of the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), operator of the site;
3. Direct the IICE to publicize a report within ninety (90) days with a risk-based strategic plan that addresses all existing and emergent problems with a minimum mandate of preventing the abandonment of the site, and the ultimate goal of minimizing public health risks;
4. Authorize the Commission to employ qualified project managers, technical consultants and contractors, and engineering firms to implement the plan;
5. Further direct the IICE to continue monitoring, and to publicize regular and accurate progress reports, as well as public health alerts as needed, working with Japan and with the public in an independent and transparent process;
6. Call upon Member States and the international community to provide expeditious funding and resources for this urgent endeavor to protect the nations of the world from additional impending, irreparable harm.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley instruct its Health Department to research and inform the public regarding elevated risk from seafood and other Pacific basin products, and to educate the population of Berkeley regarding specific treatments for radiation exposure and have in place emergency procedures to administer treatment, if necessary, to mitigate radiation exposure.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be sent to the U.N. General Assembly, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Power President Barack Obama Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Barbara Boxer, Congresswoman and Representative to the 68th Session of the U.N. General Assembly Barbara Lee, and Governor Jerry Brown, with a request to the U.S. elected officials that they do whatever they can to keep the Environmental Protection Agency radiation safe thresholds at or below the levels that were established before March 11, 2011 and that there be regular testing and accurate reporting of radiation levels in air, water, soil and food.