



NFLA media release, 8 June 2023, For immediate use

World Ocean Day appeal to international bodies over Fukushima dump plan

Today (8 June) is celebrated the world over as UN World Ocean Day. The UK/Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities have chosen this day to make a final appeal to the International Maritime Organisation and the United Nations to intercede to stop the Japanese Government and nuclear industry from committing a criminal folly.

For the Japanese Government and executives at Tokyo Electric Power (TEPCO) which formerly operated the Fukushima nuclear power plant, plan imminently to dump well over one million tonnes of radioactive water into the Pacific Ocean. This water has been used to cool the reactors at the plant which were destroyed by an earthquake and tsunami in March 2011. The radioactive water has been stored on site in large drums; now there are plans to start to discharge the water out to sea through a pipeline especially built for this purpose.

Although the water has been 'treated' this cannot remove the radioactive tritium that is present that if inhaled or ingested can become fatal to marine life and ultimately to any humans who come into contact with it.

Councillor Lawrence O'Neill, Chair of the UK/Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities, said: *"In looking to release the contaminated water, Japan will be transgressing the commitments it has made as a nation under the London Protocol and the UN Law of the Sea not to pollute our oceans and, more specifically, not to pollute them with radioactive materials."*

"We are concerned that not only will marine life be jeopardised but human life too and that the discharge will destroy many livelihoods as this will have an adverse impact on the fishing and tourism industries. We stand with the people and nations of the Pacific in calling upon the Japanese Government and nuclear industry to step back and save our ocean from this blight. This water should be retained on land until it is truly safe."

Ends//..

The letter to the International Maritime Organisation and United Nations reads:

Mr Kitack Lim, Secretary-General, International Maritime Organisation.

By email to: info@imo.org

Mr. Vladimir Jares, Director, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea,
Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations.

By email to: doalos@un.org

8 June 2023

An appeal on World Ocean Day: Dumping radioactive water from Fukushima into the Pacific Ocean

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR & RENEWABLE ENERGY ISSUES

Nuclear Free Local Authorities

Councils working for a renewable, safe and peaceful future



Dear Secretary-General Lim and Director Jares,

I am writing to you as Chair of the UK/Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities to make an appeal to you both on this World Ocean Day for your organisations to actively intercede with the Japanese Government and Tokyo Electric Power (TEPCO), the operators of the Fukushima Daichii nuclear power plant, to oppose their plans to imminently commence the discharge of over one million tons of radioactive water from storage through a pipeline into the Pacific Ocean.

It is our contention that this tragic and irreversible action by Japan would represent clear violations of its obligations as a signatory state to:

- The London Protocol which (to quote from the IMO website) 'provides a framework for Parties to effectively prevent pollution of the sea caused by dumping or incineration at sea of wastes and other matter' and the agreement made at the 16th Consultative Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Protocol which specifically prohibited the dumping of all types of radioactive waste including low- and mid-level materials from 1993.
- The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea which (to quote from the UN website) places under Article 207 (Pollution from land-based sources) an obligation on 'States (to) adopt laws and regulation to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment from land-based sources, including..pipelines and outfall structures..' and 'take other measures as are necessary' to do so etc. The dumping of radioactive contaminated water is clearly contrary to the duty to conserve the marine ecosystem defined under the UN Convention.

This action will also be contrary to Japan's support for United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 'to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development'.

On the twelfth anniversary of the Fukushima disaster, in March of this year, I wrote to the Japanese Prime Minister and Cabinet and to TEPCO executives to register our condemnation and objections to the discharge plan. I wish to reaffirm that the NFLA remains opposed to this proposal because the Advanced Liquid Processing System, which shall be used to treat this water, will not filter out tritium and other toxic industrial chemicals and contaminants prior to its release into the sea. Radioactive tritium is toxic to fish and seafood populations and ultimately to the humans who consume them.

The discharge of the water will have a disastrous impact upon the livelihoods of Japanese fisherfolk and it will also contaminate tide-washed coastal pastures, affecting dairy and meat products from animals reared on them. In addition, during storm surges, contact with and inhalation of water particles will be dangerous to humans; such contact can occur up to ten miles inland. Scientists have also predicted that the contaminated water will spread throughout the entire Pacific Ocean within ten years blighting the region.

The NFLA joins our partners in Mayors for a Nuclear Power Free Japan, anti-nuclear activists everywhere, the Japanese domestic fishing and farming industries, the Pacific Islands Council, and Pacific regional governments in condemning this plan.

I would urge you please to speedily mobilise the resources of the IMO and UN to halt this plan which will cause irreparable harm to the Pacific Ocean marine environment and to the livelihoods of all of those who are reliant upon it.

Many thanks for your consideration of this letter. I wish you every success in this endeavour and look forward to hearing of your progress. In the meantime, please direct your reply by email to our NFLA Secretary, Richard Outram, to richard.outram@manchester.gov.uk.

Yours most sincerely, Councillor Lawrence O'Neill

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR & RENEWABLE ENERGY ISSUES

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