



## **NFLA media release, 22 August 2023, For immediate use**

### **Keep the faith: Japan's wastewater plan to poison the Pacific can still be stopped**

The UK/Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities were disappointed by Japanese Prime Minister Kishida's announcement that dumping into the Pacific Ocean of radioactive wastewater from the Fukushima Daishi nuclear station can commence from Thursday (24 August).

The announcement was made shortly after the Prime Minister met with leaders of Japan's largest fishing union, whose members remain bitterly opposed to the plan fearing it will destroy their industry and livelihoods.

As of 8 June 2023, there were 1,335,381 cubic metres of radioactive wastewater stored in tanks at the former nuclear plant. The Fukushima Daishi plant was near destroyed by an earthquake and tsunami in March 2011. Water has since been used to cool the damaged inoperable reactors and this has been stored on site in barrels.

Rather than finding a solution that provides for the long-term storage of the water until its radioactivity had decayed so sparing the marine environment, operator TEPCO and the Japanese Government, with the acquiescence of the International Atomic Energy Agency, have determined instead to take that shortcut so beloved of the nuclear industry everywhere when seeking to dispose of radioactive waste – dumping it at sea.

Historically such practice in the UK led to the Irish Sea, the beaches of Cumbria and North Wales, and the coastline of Northern Scotland becoming contaminated and at Fukushima a pipeline has been built through which Japan intends to dispose of the 1.3 million tons of now-radioactive water.

Though treated to remove many of the radionuclides, the wastewater still contains tritium, carbon-14, strontium-90 and iodine-129, and regional and international campaigners concerned for the ocean environment, human health, and the fishing community are outraged by the plan.

The UK/Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities have previously protested the plan in letters to TEPCO executives and government ministers from the Prime Minister down, and more recently also wrote to the United Nations charging that the discharge would be contrary to the undertakings that Japan gave under international law to refrain from contaminating our oceans, particularly with radioactive waste.

The NFLAs also supplied a message of solidarity to an international campaign of opposition, being coordinated by a South Korean civil society coalition, for use at a press conference held in Seoul. Details of this conference – and our statement - were included in this briefing:

<https://www.nuclearpolicy.info/briefings/nfla-policy-briefing-271-global-media-conference-of-the-global-campaign-network-against-japans-ocean-dumping-of-nuclear-wastewater-seoul-korea/>

In response to the news, Korean civil society will hold a 24-hour candlelight rally from today at City Hall Plaza in the capital to put pressure on the Korean president and political leaders to act, followed by

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regional rallies and then a national rally on 8 September. Elsewhere in the Pacific nations and in Europe, similar protests are planned.

The dumping plan will not happen overnight. According to the Atomic Energy Society of Japan this will last at least 17 years, but, according to Beyond Nuclear <https://beyondnuclear.org/> decommissioning work at the Fukushima is expected to take at least 40 years so the operation may take many decades to complete.

Whilst we in the UK and Republic of Ireland are many thousands of miles away from this calamity, our international solidarity can still make a difference. For it is not too late for Japan to change tack and choose to halt the plan.

The Chair of the UK/Ireland NFLA Steering Committee Councillor Lawrence O'Neill urges British and Irish anti-nuclear activists not to give up hope and recommends taking some action:

*"One action that we can all take is signing the One Million Global Citizens' Joint Statement calling on Japan to curtail this criminal plan <https://campaigns.do/campaigns/1029>.*

*"The NFLAs have also twice written to Japanese Ministers and TEPCO officials and to the United Nations opposing the plan. You could also follow our example and register your protest with the Japanese Embassy in the UK or the Republic of Ireland.*

*"To become better informed on the impact of tritium when released into the marine environment, we can recommend the podcast Nuclear Hotseat [www.NuclearHotseat.com](http://www.NuclearHotseat.com) with campaigner Libbe HaLevy, who has hosted several broadcasts with renowned British marine radiation expert Tim Deere-Jones.*

*"Details of the relevant contacts follow in the notes.*

*"Don't give up - keep the faith".*

**Ends://.. For more details about this media release please contact Richard Outram, NFLA Secretary, by email at [richard.outram@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:richard.outram@manchester.gov.uk)**

**This media release can also be found on the NFLA website at <https://www.nuclearpolicy.info/news/keep-the-faith-japans-wastewater-plan-to-poison-the-pacific-can-still-be-stopped/>**

## **Notes to Editors**

Embassy of Japan in the UK  
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Embassy of Japan in Ireland  
His Excellency, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Mr Norio Maruyama  
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The podcasts made by Nuclear Hotseat ([www.NuclearHotseat.com](http://www.NuclearHotseat.com)) and campaigner Libbe HaLevy can be found at:

**NH #613: TRITIUM: Japan's Radioactive Water Dump Lies, Tritium Truth w/Marine Biologist Tim Deere-Jones** - <https://nuclearhotseat.com/podcast/japans-radioactive-water-tritium-truth/>

**NH #629: SPECIAL: Japan's Radioactive Fukushima Water Dump – Media Propaganda, Report from South Pacific** - <https://nuclearhotseat.com/podcast/japan-radioactive-fukushima-water-dump/>

And for the basics:

**NH #271: How Radiation in Oceans Contaminates Our Food Supply – Tim Deere-Jones**  
- <https://nuclearhotseat.com/podcast/nuclear-hotseat-271-how-radiation-in-oceans-contaminate-our-food-supply-tim-deere-jones/>