



# THREE MILE ISLAND ALERT

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## TMI Set to Close in 2019

Unable to find a buyer for its electricity at the most recent PJM Interconnect auctions, Exelon Corporation has announced plans to retire the Three Mile Island (TMI) nuclear power plant around September 30, 2019. However, the company used a similar threat to shut down its plants in Illinois and New York to pressure lawmakers to pass bailouts providing funds for the continued operation of their plants.

TMI has been losing money for the last six years, more than \$300 million in all, primarily because it can't compete with companies that generate electricity at a much lower cost using natural gas, solar, and wind. Being unable to remain viable in the marketplace, TMI's parent company has put the pressure on state governments to bail them out.

Mobilizing local municipal and county officials, the company stresses the importance of tax revenues for the municipalities where TMI's workers live. Exelon claims 202 workers from Lancaster County, 193 from Dauphin, 76 from York, 50 from Cumberland, and 43 from Lebanon.

Similar arguments can be heard from the state legislature's nuclear caucus that

was formed in 2017. Led by state Senator Ryan Aument (R-Landisville), the caucus greeted Exelon's shutdown announcement with a statement stressing the "significant loss of family-sustaining jobs" closure would bring.

TMI-Alert Chair Eric Epstein points out that most of those workers will be needed for the many years it will take to shut down and decommission the plant. Further, he points out that TMI is not a "major" employer in our region.

"Central Pennsylvania has weathered the closing of Olmstead Air Force Base, Beth-

lehem Steel, AMP, Carlisle Tire & Rubber, and other major employers, and I'm certain we can sustain the gradual draw down of TMI employees over the years it will take to shut down and decommission the plant," Epstein said.

Despite public pronouncements from the Nuclear Caucus in favor of a bailout, no legislation has been introduced toward that end.

The company previously clung to the hope that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) would approve a plan from the

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**Free Potassium Iodide Pills** In the event of a nuclear accident, taking a potassium iodide (KI) pill prevents the thyroid gland from absorbing any radioactive iodine that might be part of the release. The dose is one pill per day and we'll provide you with two for each member of your family, which is enough to give you time to get out of harm's way. The pills were purchased by the EFMR monitoring group and donated to TMI Alert. Use the enclosed form and envelope to order your pills.

# Ongoing Effects of Fukushima Disastrous

There is really no end in sight of this ongoing catastrophe.

In 2017 it was learned that radiation levels in the reactor would kill a human in less than a minute. Robots specially made to enter the reactor didn't fare much better until a special radiation-hardened robot was able to reach the reactor's melted core last July.

Groundwater has been in contact with the melted fuel since the accident started in 2011.

Dismantling and decommissioning the reactors may be postponed for a century as the radiation makes it impossible for humans to do the necessary work.

The tsunami dumped an estimated five million tons of debris into the Pacific including boats, parts of houses and factories, cars, and some of the 20,000 dead. In the next

month, the powerful Kuroshio Current, began depositing debris on an island off the coast of British Columbia.

On the good news side of the ledger lawyers representing American sailors on the USS Reagan, who sailed toward the coast of Japan in a humanitarian effort dubbed Operation Tomodachi, had a court ruling in their favor last June.

The relief effort delivered food, supplies, and clothing to the victims of the tsunami. Many of the 4500 Reagan crew members were exposed to excessive amounts of radiation spewing from the stricken reactors. Suffering the effects of exposure to the radiation, the affected sailors initiated a suit against the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) based on their gross negligence in the operation of the plant.

In court, TEPCO argued

the case should be heard in Japan, where they've received many favorable rulings in related cases. A U.S. Court ruled last June that the case should be heard in the states.

A legal team headed by former U.S. Senator John Edwards is representing the sailors. The class action filing could cover as many as 24,000 members of the U.S. military who were involved in the Operation. Already dozens are ill and nine have died due to their exposure.

## TMI Closing in 2019

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Trump Administration to funnel billions of dollars to the owners of old and expensive coal and nuclear plants to insulate them from competition. FERC rejected that proposal in January in a vote the Natural Resources Defense Council characterized as a "major victory for consumers, the environment, and facts."

There's one more effort underway at FERC, a procedure now underway to ensure resilience in the U.S. power grid. By "resilience" they mean "diversification" which would include coal and nuclear plants. It is unlikely the procedure could be completed in time to save TMI. Similarly, the PJM Interconnection now has "resilience" on its agenda and it appears whether TMI closes in 2019 depends on that group's findings.

## Epstein Seeks PA House Seat

TMI Alert Chair Eric Epstein is a candidate for the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to represent District 105, a seat currently occupied by Rep. Ron Marsico who is not seeking reelection.

Eric has served as TMI Alert's chairperson for decades and is the founder of the EFMR Monitoring Group. He was a co-founder and serves as coordinator of Rock the Capital, a non-partisan voter education organization

formed after state officials enacted a massive pay raise for themselves in 2005. He is also a founding board member of the Sustainable Energy Fund (SEF) of Central Eastern Pennsylvania. SEF aids in the development of sustainable energy companies. He also serves as vice president of the board of the Central Dauphin School District.

Visit Eric's campaign website for more information at <http://www.watchdogwith-abite.com/>

## TMI Survivors Met on 3/28

In April 2016, Christine Layman of East Manchester Township in York County started a "Three Mile Island Survivors" Facebook page intended for those who believe the TMI accident is related to health issues they or their loved ones have experienced. To date, some 4000 people have become part of the Facebook group.

On the 39<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the accident, about five dozen victims gathered in Dillsburg for a forum that included journalists who covered the accident, academics with a continuing interest in energy issues, medical professionals, and TMI-Alert Planning Council member Mary Stamos, a lay expert on the effects of radiation on living organisms.

Cindy Folkners, a Radiation Health Specialist with the Beyond Nuclear organization, reported that nationally the onset of thyroid cancer occurs at age 49. In central Pennsylvania onset occurs at age 42. Nationally, about five percent of those cancers are aggressive. Here, 10.2% of the cancers are characterized as aggressive. Additionally, Dr. Renu Joshi, an endocrinologist, reported that 65 to 70% of her patients with thyroid cancer live within five miles of TMI.

During a question and answer period, many people related stories of medical problems they thought might be related to TMI. Ms. Layman, herself, has had more than her share of health problems that have included melanoma, fibromyalgia, thyroid problems, infertility, and brain lesions.

At the end of the meeting, TMIA's Bill Cologie announced that for the 40th anniversary, TMIA will host a TMI Survivors Reunion, complete with a health registry to document the accident's health effects

## Philip Clark Dies

On the 39th anniversary of the beginning of the TMI accident, former GPU executive Philip Clark died. Mr. Clark served as executive vice president of GPU-Nuclear at the time of the accident and succeeded the notorious Bob Arnold as President in 1983.

## Solar Power Growing

In 2017, the world installed an unprecedented 98 gigawatts of solar energy, more than the net addition of all coal, gas, and nuclear power plants combined.

In other solar news, California will require almost all new homes to be built with solar panels.

In other California news, Pacific Gas & Electric announced it will phase out nuclear power production in California by 2025. That means the Diablo Canyon Power Plant, the state's last remaining nuke, will be decommissioned and replaced.

## Rep. McIlhinney Proposes 100% Renewable Energy for PA

Legislation to amend the state's Alternative Energy Portfolio (AEP) to require that all of Pennsylvania's electricity comes from renewable sources has been proposed by Rep. Chuck McIlhinney (R-Bucks). Currently the AEP requires that 18% of Pennsylvania's energy comes from alternative energy suppliers by 2021. McIlhinney's proposal, which has bipartisan support, calls for 100% of the state's energy is clean energy by 2050.



Paula Kinney and Betz Drazbo, longtime members of the Concerned Mothers and Women were on hand in Dillsburg.

# Epstein Addresses Exelon Stockholders

TMI Alert Chair Eric Epstein long ago bought a share of Exelon stock to gain entry to the corporation's annual meeting. This year's meeting was on May 1, commonly known as May Day, and Eric informed the shareholders that he's not a believer in "corporate socialism"—he doesn't think ratepayers and tax payers should once again bail out the owners of TMI.

He pointed out that TMI Unit I came online two years behind schedule and more than two times over budget, costs borne by ratepayers. Unit II came on line five years behind schedule and three times over budget. Again, ratepayers picked up the tab.

Unit II melted down four months after coming on line. Two years later, under Gov.

Thornburgh's bailout plan, ratepayers coughed up \$987 million to defuel TMI-2.

When Pennsylvania deregulated electric utilities in 1996, consumers were allowed to pick their electricity provider for the first time. Unfortunately, the law allowed the owners of nuclear power plants to recover their bad debts and pay off those expensive reactors. That unprecedented \$9 billion bailout took consumers a decade to pay off.

Given all that, Eric informed the stockholders that ratepayers are not interested in once again funding a bailout. He concluded his remarks informing them, "We never got the energy TMI generated. We got the risk. We got the radiation. We got the waste. And you want us to pay for another bailout?"

## Russians Can Hack U.S. Nuclear Plants

If the cost, potential for catastrophic accidents, and accumulating wastes weren't reason enough to phase out the existing nuclear power plants, we recently learned the Russians have the capability of hacking the U.S. electrical grid and can even take control of individual power plants.

The FBI and Department of Homeland Security reported in March that "Russian government cyber actors" have been targeting the U.S. infrastructure including the energy

grid, nuclear and commercial facilities, and other sites since March 2016.

The government informed electric utilities last summer the hackers were able to gain access to at least one power plant's control system.

While a spokesperson from the Edison Electric Institute reports that U.S. power companies are taking steps to protect our systems, others are recalling that prior to the digital age the U.S. was able to operate the grid without digital controls.

## Lobbyist Brags About Shaking Down Gov't

Michael Krancer, a lobbyist who dashed into the private sector after serving as Gov. Corbett's Environmental Protection Secretary, bragged at an oil and gas industry conference about how Exelon profited in New York from the same kind of subsidy the nuclear industry is seeking in Pennsylvania.

During his presentation, Krancer detailed exactly how well Exelon made out in New York in a slide titled "Is Politics Profitable?" He noted Exelon had \$610 million invested in their Fitzpatrick Nuclear Plant, including lobbying and public relations costs, and came away with a subsidy of \$5.7 billion over the next 12 years from New York State. His slide showed a return on investment of more than 570%. His point, money spent on lobbying and public relations results in corporate profits.

After years of declines due to persistently low wholesale electricity prices, Exelon is now projecting a 17 percent increase in earnings per share in 2018. It is estimated two-thirds of that increase is coming from the subsidies approved by Illinois and New York.

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