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Statement by Anna Aurilio on the Future of 'Nuclear Renaissance' in the U.S.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Nearly two weeks after an earthquake and tsunami ravaged Japan, the country remains in the midst of a nuclear crisis. As workers try to cool the critical reactors and get the situation under some measure of control, the fallout from this disaster has touched millions of lives in Japan. Drinking water samples in Tokyo, the largest most populous metropolitan area, on Tuesday and Wednesday were found to be contaminated with radioactive iodine at a level dangerous to infants. In addition, a dozen agricultural products from the Fukushima region have been found to be radioactive at dangerous levels and hundreds of thousands have been evacuated from the area around the reactors. In response to this disaster, countries around the world, ranging from Germany to China, have paused their development of new nuclear reactors and are conducting extensive safety reviews of their existing plants. Environment America has a long history of opposing nuclear energy, and recently released reports highlighting the expense and the inherent risks of building and operating nuclear reactors.

[The Nuclear Bailout](#)
[Generating Failure](#)

Environment America's Washington, D.C. Office Director, Anna Aurilio, issued the following statement:

"Our hearts go out to the families in Japan that have been stricken by a massive natural disaster and now must worry about the safety of their children's drinking water because of a human disaster.

"The message today has never been so clear; nuclear power did not make sense before this tragic disaster and it does not make sense now. Our research showed well before the tragic events in Japan that nuclear power is risky and dangerous and the costs, to our health, environment, and economy are all too high.

"The events unfolding in Japan must be a wake-up call for Americans about the dangers of nuclear power. The question about nuclear power that is on all of our minds and should be the basis for this discussion is why is it worth the risk? Our current use of nuclear power is gambling with our children's health and our environment. Unfortunately, in Japan Mother Nature has yet again proven stronger than anything we can design.

“We have now seen that the risk of losing this bet is enormous. There have already been many long-term effects of this disaster in Japan and around the world. Just yesterday, drinking water in the largest metropolitan area in the world was contaminated and the government had to warn women not to allow their children to drink water from the tap. Other effects like massive contamination of a dozen different crops and seafood, swaths of land around the reactor-that are now rendered uninhabitable, and the increased likelihood of cancer in people exposed to radiation are also a reality today.

“Japan is a long ways away from me, but Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant in Maryland is not. Calvert Cliffs is just 47 miles from my home in Washington. If the worst were to happen here it would be my family the Nuclear Regulatory Commission would be telling to evacuate and leave our home behind. The pictures would be of my daughter, getting scanned for radiation. I believe we can do better.

“We must learn from this moment and never allow this risk to our families here in America. More than 108 million Americans live within 50 miles of a nuclear power plant, and Tokyo is 150 miles from the Fukushima plant. We can and must move away from energy technologies that expose our environment and families’ health to this immense risk and repower our country with clean, renewable energy, like wind and solar power.”

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Environment America is a federation of 29 state-based, citizen-funded environmental advocacy organizations working for a cleaner, greener, healthier future.

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