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### ***More than 100 Groups Call on EPA to Withdraw Dramatically Weakened Radiation Guides***

Over 100 environmental organizations today called on U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Gina McCarthy to withdraw EPA's controversial new Protective Action Guides (PAGs), which would allow exposure to very high doses from radiation releases before government would take action to protect the public.

The PAGs are intended to guide the response to nuclear power reactor accidents (like Fukushima in Japan, Chernobyl in Ukraine and Three Mile Island in the U.S.), "dirty bomb" explosions, radioactive releases from nuclear fuel and weapons facilities, nuclear transportation accidents, and other radioactive releases.

Although official estimates of health risks from radiation have gone up substantially (even higher for women) since promulgation of the old PAGs, the new EPA guidance contemplates radically increased "allowable" exposures in the intermediate and long-term periods after radiation releases.

The new PAGs

- propose five options for drinking water which would dramatically increase the permitted concentrations of radioactivity in drinking water, by as much as 27,000 times, compared to EPA's current Safe Drinking Water Act limits;
- suggest markedly relaxing long-term cleanup standards;
- incorporate very high and outdated allowable food contamination levels;
- eliminate requirements to evacuate people threatened with high projected radiation doses to the thyroid and skin;
- eliminate limits on lifetime whole body doses; and
- recommend dumping radioactive waste in municipal garbage dumps not designed for such waste.

"Rather than requiring protective actions to limit public radiation exposures, EPA is now saying it would allow the public to be exposed to doses far higher than ever before considered acceptable," said Daniel Hirsch, president of Committee to Bridge the Gap.

"Even though EPA now admits radiation is more harmful than previously thought, it is weakening rather than tightening radiation protections," said Diane D'Arrigo of the Nuclear Information and Resource Service.

The full letter is at <http://committeetobridgethegap.org/GroupPAGltr9-16-13.pdf>

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