

**Beyond Nuclear
Committee to Bridge the Gap
Nuclear Information and Resource Service
Physicians for Social Responsibility**

For Immediate Release
August 4, 2014

Contact: Dan Hirsch, CBG (831) 336-8003
Diane D'Arrigo, NIRS (301) 270-6477
Cindy Folkers, Beyond Nuclear (240) 354-4314
John Rachow, MD, PSR (319) 530-3608

**Despite Acknowledging Increased Cancer Risk from Radiation,
EPA Suggests Weakening Radiation Standards
Fails to Protect Most Vulnerable
Thousands Write EPA in Opposition**

Washington, DC. - The Office of Radiation and Indoor Air (ORIA) at the Environmental Protection Agency is considering rewriting its nuclear power radiation standards, which have not been updated since first adopted in 1977. EPA's current official risk estimates indicate *radiation is at least three times more potent a carcinogen* than understood back then.

Despite that, EPA is advocating new standards that would weaken rather than strengthen the rules, allowing the public to be exposed to much more radiation from nuclear power. More than 6000 individuals and [seventy organizations](#) have written to EPA in opposition.

EPA itself in the past has said that radiation should not be a "privileged pollutant," with allowable exposures greater than that of other pollutants. Yet EPA's current radiation standards are already far too lax, allowing twenty to two thousand times more cancers than the acceptable risk range EPA permits for all other carcinogens. EPA now allows radiation doses that, by its own risk estimates, would cause cancer in one in every 500 people exposed, whereas it limits other pollutants to one to 100 in a million.

"Rather than requiring radiation to meet the standards for all other carcinogens, one EPA proposal would *increase* most of the allowable radioactive concentrations," said Daniel Hirsch, a Lecturer on nuclear policy at UC Santa Cruz and President of the Committee to Bridge the Gap. "By eliminating existing limits on doses to organs and replacing them with a fictional 'effective dose equivalent,' EPA's own studies indicate that permissible exposures to radionuclides such as plutonium could increase as much as 25 times," Hirsch said.

"EPA appears to favor less protection by adopting a deceptive way of recalculating radiation doses. The math would allow far higher routine radioactive emissions from nuclear power," said Diane D'Arrigo of Nuclear Information and Resource Service.

John Rachow MD, Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) Board member said, "PSR asks the general public to join in urging the EPA to protect our unborn children and their mothers from radiation exposure from nuclear power facilities in the U.S." [PSR comments](#)

"EPA needs to reflect the reality of what scientific research is showing—that the female infant could be 7 times more sensitive to radiation than an adult male. EPA should take this opportunity to protect the most vulnerable, not prop up a waning nuclear industry," said

Cindy Folkers, Radiation and Health Hazard Specialist at Beyond Nuclear. [Beyond Nuclear's main comments](#), [water comments](#), [waste comments](#).

Many citizens' groups are also challenging the basis for the potential rewrite now, citing concerns that EPA's real agenda is to allow more radiation exposure so new nuclear facilities can be built, ostensibly to address climate change.

"It's a double whammy! First EPA's new carbon rule calls on states to subsidize nuclear with our energy dollars then starts changing rules to allow more radioactivity to be released from the whole nuclear power fuel chain. So nuclear power can release more radioactivity causing more cancer, while being subsidized with money that should go to sustainable energy that doesn't cause cancer," said Diane D'Arrigo.

[Beyond Nuclear](#) aims to educate and activate the public about the connections between nuclear power and nuclear weapons and the need to abandon both to safeguard our future.

[Committee to Bridge the Gap](#) (CBG): bridging the gap between nuclear dangers and a safe, sustainable future.

[Nuclear Information and Resource Service](#)/World Information Service on Energy [NIRS/WISE] is the information and networking center for those concerned about nuclear power, radioactive waste, radiation, and sustainable energy issues.

[Physicians for Social Responsibility](#) (PSR) is the medical and public health voice working to prevent the use or spread of nuclear weapons and to slow, stop and reverse global warming and the toxic degradation of the environment.

END