



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Georgia WAND Continues Legal Challenge of Plant Vogtle Expansion**

Georgia WAND, working with the communities living within the 20-40 mile radius of Plant Vogtle, is very concerned with NRC's "business as usual" approach to nuclear reactor licensing after the catastrophic events at Fukushima.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) must slow down reactor licensing and relicensing in order to address a wide range of post-Fukushima health and safety concerns in order to comply with existing federal law, according to 19 separate legal challenges filed today by a total of 26 public interest groups and several individuals, including Georgia WAND.

The groups contend that under federal law, the NRC may not issue or renew a single reactor license until it has either strengthened regulations to protect the public from severe accident risks or until it has made a careful and detailed study of the environmental implications of not doing so. The groups are also pursuing a technical finding from high in the NRC that leads to upgraded safety standards.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's 90-day review of the lessons learned from the meltdowns and radioactive release at Fukushima produced substantial new information that raised health and safety concerns that now must be considered in formal environmental impact statements, the groups contend. Because of this, existing environmental impact statements for all reactors in the licensing process fail to satisfy the requirements of NEPA, and issuing licenses prior to the completion of supplemental environmental impact statements would be illegal.

" It is very clear in the wake of Japan's nuclear disaster that current regulations are fundamentally inadequate. Our specific concerns at Plant Vogtle involve the safety and environmental impacts of onsite spent fuel storage and the 'cascading' effect. In Japan, damage caused by overheating had the cascading impact of one core reactor meltdown affecting the neighboring reactors, "said Amanda Hill-Attkisson, Managing Director at Georgia WAND. "This has a significant ramification for Plant Vogtle Units 3&4 which rely on similar cooling systems. We urge the NRC to put public safety first and follow the existing federal law to take into account this information before issuing any new licenses at Plant Vogtle.

“Significant regulatory changes are needed to ensure that existing or new nuclear reactors do not pose unacceptable safety and environmental risks to the public,” said Dr. Arjun Makhijani, a nuclear expert who prepared a declaration that will be filed with the contentions. “In light of the disastrous and ongoing events at Fukushima, it is clear that the issues of public safety raised by the Task Force are exceptionally grave.”

The delays that could result from additional analysis are likely to be substantial, and it is possible license applications could be rejected altogether at the end of the licensing process. If a license is issued prior to the NRC conducting the required environmental analyses, the Commission could be held accountable by federal courts.

A list of the 26 groups filing contentions with the NRC today follows. The contentions address reactors at facilities including Vogtle, Diablo Canyon, Watts Bar, Bellefonte, Summer, South Texas, Comanche Peak, Turkey Point, Indian Point, Calvert Cliffs, Davis-Besse, Seabrook, Fermi, Levy, Shearon Harris, North Anna, Bell Bend and W.S. Lee.

An example from the contentions being filed today can be found at:

<http://foe.org/sites/default/files/>