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Enviro Group Calls for Daily Updates on Nebraska Nuclear Power Plant Floodings

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SACRAMENTO, Calif., June 30, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- A leading environmental group is calling on the Omaha Public Power District and the Army Corp of Engineers to intensify the pro-active publication of all information regarding two flood-threatened Nebraska nuclear plants at Fort Calhoun and Cooper Nuclear Station.

The Renewable Energy Accountability Project (REAP), a group pushing safe and renewable energy, demands that the media and public receive better real time understanding of the risks of this growing crisis.

According to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the plants are officially listed as experiencing an "unusual event."(1,2) The emerging crisis has prompted chair of the Nuclear Regulator Commission, Tom Jaczko, to conduct a very unusual tour of the flooded plants on Monday. Jaczko said the plants were safe, but told reporters that he would not guess if the water would rise and what could happen in the future.

"The nuclear plant at Fort Calhoun is sitting in two feet of water. It's shut down. The water is rising. The flood berm has broken down. The 'Flood Rumor Control' website maintained by Omaha Public Power District is insufficient; and is structured to provide after the fact apologies instead of real time information. To call this an '*unusual event or occurrence*,' understates the inherent risk of operating nuclear power plants in flood-risk areas," stated REAP spokesperson Sam George.

"The National Weather Service's Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service -- relying on data supplied by the Army Corps of Engineers -- is predicting that the Missouri River near the threatened Ft. Calhoun nuclear plant will remain at 'moderate flood stage' for an indefinite period. However, this information remains buried in a government website.(3) REAP calls on the Omaha Public Power District and the Army Corps of Engineers to issue daily press briefings on the flood situation threatening the two Nebraska nuclear power plants, and end briefing by crisis," George continued.

"The real answer is that as long as the water is rising. The public has a right to be fully informed -- on a daily basis -- as events unfold," George said.

According to REAP, it is all too common that electric utilities play down the risks. They don't want to admit they may not have the situation under control. They don't want to scare people.

"The officials in charge of managing this crisis are taking a very closed approach. We have to rely on only what they tell us. And they don't tell us much. Obviously, this is not on the scale of a Fukushima crisis, but this does not mean it cannot become dangerous. The public has a right to know the safety situation on a daily basis," concluded George.

REAP is a nationwide grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring energy independence and reducing atmospheric pollution. REAP monitors and reports on the progress of clean electricity generation as we transition away from dirty coal and fossil fuels.

(1) See Nuclear Regulatory Commission, <http://pbadupws.nrc.gov/docs/ML1117/ML111780547.pdf>

(2) See Nuclear Regulatory Commission <http://pbadupws.nrc.gov/docs/ML1117/ML11171735.pdf>

(3) The National Weather Service's Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service's website can be found at: <http://water.weather.gov/ahps2/hydrograph.php?wfo=oax&gage=blan1>

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