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Statement of Congressman Dennis J. Kucinich on the GAO Report on the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Plant

Washington, May 18 -

Today, the General Accounting Office released a scathing report on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's handling of the crisis at the Davis Besse Nuclear Power Plant. The report was jointly requested by Congressman Kucinich (D-OH), Senator Voinovich (R-OH) and Congressman LaTourette (R-OH). Congressman Dennis J. Kucinich issued the following statement on the report: "The General Accounting Office (GAO) Report highlights shocking, serious and dangerous systemic problems at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Problems that call into question whether the agency can, as it is currently run, continue to perform its most fundamental functions-to protect public safety. This report reveals failures at almost every rung of the bureaucratic ladder at the NRC. "The crisis at Davis-Besse is the most serious safety issue to face a commercial nuclear power plant since Three Mile Island. The GAO report shows that the NRC was ill equipped, ill informed and far too slow to react. The NRC's reaction to Davis-Besse was inadequate, irresponsible and left the public at grave risk. "The GAO Report entitled, 'NRC Needs to More Aggressively and Comprehensively Resolve Issues Related to the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Plant Shutdown', concludes that the NRC that should have identified and prevented the hole in the reactor head at the plant. The report also finds that the NRC, which is in charge of regulating the nuclear industry, lacks a credible process to close a dangerous reactor. This report portrays regulators stripped of the tools to regulate, leaving the NRC little more than a rubber stamp for the industry. "This report is a black eye on the reputation of the NRC. Despite numerous warnings, the NRC cavalierly disregarded public safety as Davis-Besse drifted closer to disaster. NRC was aware of cracked tubes and corrosion at plants similar to Davis-Besse yet, it gave First Energy preferential treatment and inspected the plant fewer times than other plants. This sort of preferential treatment seems to indicate that the NRC protected First Energy's bottom line at the expense of public safety. "The NRC's response to this report may be more troubling than the report itself. Regrettably, the NRC has chosen to disregard the recommendation of this report. The NRC must learn from its mistakes. I find it troubling, as a Member of Congress with oversight over the NRC, that the agency appears to be arrogantly ignoring the recommendations of the GAO. For the NRC to spin this report and partake in Washington double talk will only risk future disasters. "This report must serve as a wake up call to the NRC, the nuclear industry and this Congress. The status quo will no longer serve as adequate to ensure public safety. Serious and substantial systemic changes must occur as a result of this report. The burden now falls upon the NRC to regain the public's trust and ensure that the agency is equipped to protect the public." For a complete copy of the GAO report please click [here](#).