



[Home](#) [About/Contact](#) [Campaigns](#) [Publications](#) [State Watch](#) [Federal](#)
[Beat](#) [News](#) [Chapters](#) [Take Action](#)
 LEARN MORE:
[News - Home](#) [Press Clips](#) [PEERmedia](#)

CHECK IT OUT:

[FREE PEERreview](#) [Join PEER](#) [Donate Now](#) [Stay Informed](#) [Blow the Whistle](#)

News Releases

For Immediate Release: October 28, 2009
 Contact: Kirsten Stade (202) 265-7337

 [Print](#)  [Email](#)

SUIT TO AIR INTERNAL EPA PROTESTS ON RADIATION EXPOSURE PLAN — Experts' Objections to Radically Higher Radiation Exposure Levels Yet to Be Seen

Washington, DC — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has not come clean on its plan to dramatically raise permissible radioactive release levels, according to a lawsuit filed today by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER). The new draft standards have been promulgated in secrecy despite sharp controversy about allowing public exposure to radiation levels vastly higher than those EPA had previously deemed unacceptably dangerous.

The plan to markedly relax radiation standards was signed off on in the final days of the Bush administration, suspended by the new Obama administration prior to its publication. Obama EPA appointees are now weighing its fate. On June 11, 2009, PEER submitted a request under the Freedom of Information Act for all of the comments submitted by EPA and other federal and state agency officials to the EPA Office of Radiation and Indoor Air (ORIA) as it prepared its updated Protective Action Guides, which govern radiation protection decisions following releases from accidents or attacks. PEER had received verbal reports that both internal and external reviewers registered grave concerns about the radical relaxation of radiation exposure limits being proposed.

ORIA has yet to produce a single document requested by PEER, months beyond the response deadlines mandated under the Freedom of Information Act. On October 16, 2009, EPA's Office of General Counsel directed ORIA to comply but conceded that the only way to enforce its order would be in court. ORIA had not met previous self-announced timelines for delivery of documents or promises to provide records on a rolling basis, as they had been cleared for release. Today, PEER filed a lawsuit in federal district court in Washington, D.C. to compel production.

"President Obama directed all agencies to act in a transparent way by placing important documents in the public domain in a timely fashion," said PEER Counsel Christine Erickson who drafted the complaint. "Avoiding embarrassment is not a legal basis for deception or delay."

The radiation guides are protocols for responding to radiological incidents ranging from nuclear power-plant accidents to transportation spills to "dirty" bombs. They would significantly increase allowable public exposure to radioactivity in drinking water, including a nearly 1000-fold increase in strontium-90, a 3000 to 100,000-fold hike for iodine-131, and an almost 25,000 increase for nickel-63. The new radiation guidance would also allow long-term cleanup standards thousands of times more lax than anything EPA has ever before accepted, permitting doses to the public that EPA itself estimates would cause a cancer in as much as every fourth person exposed. These relaxations of radiation protection requirements

are favored by the nuclear industry and allies in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and Energy Department.

“EPA has bypassed open dialogue on how much radiation the public will be allowed to receive in the event of a release, and is now suppressing evidence of internal dissent on these controversial proposals,” stated PEER Executive Director Jeff Ruch, noting that congressional leaders, such as Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA), have been expressing concerns about EPA’s intentions. “Who knew that EPA had a Doctor Strangelove wing?”

###

[Read the PEER complaint](#)

[See the background of the radiation guidance issue](#)

[Look at Rep. Markey’s news release](#)

[View EPA’s invitation to sue](#)



TOP

[Contact](#)
[PEER](#) [Tell-](#)
[a-Friend](#)

[Your Privacy](#)

Ph: (202) 265-

7337 • Fax:

(202) 265-

4192 • email:

info[at]

peer.org

all content ©

peer.org 2011

website by

[puffinworks](#)

| | |
|--|--|
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="button" value="Google Search"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> only search PEER | |