

## **SWIM EMAIL TO NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

May 7, 2007

Dear Nuclear Regulatory Commission:

I am requesting that you investigate the potential dangers of (1) radioactive wastes from the refining of uranium for the Hiroshima atomic bomb, in Beverly Massachusetts in the 1940s, and (2) radioactive waste dumped in Massachusetts Bay in the 1950s and 1960s, in the light of plans to build two liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals in Massachusetts adjacent to Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary and two state ocean sanctuaries, and almost on top of the old radioactive waste dump. The entire area supports six species of endangered whales and four species of endangered sea turtles, plus an important fishing industry.

This matter is urgent, because construction on one of the terminals may begin as early as this spring. We request that qualified experts, not affiliated with the LNG companies, evaluate the dangers, and if the dangers merit still further investigation, that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission find a way to delay and if necessary stop these LNG projects.

A few weeks ago, Safer Waters in Massachusetts (Nahant SWIM) learned that during World War II, uranium was refined in Beverly, Massachusetts for the Hiroshima atomic bomb by a company then called Metal Hydrides Corporation. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and General Electric in Lynn, Massachusetts (adjacent to Nahant) also worked on the Manhattan Project, as the program to develop the bomb was called. We are deeply concerned that nuclear materials may be dredged up that are dangerous to whales, to the people, to the ecosystem of Massachusetts Bay. We have heard that in the past materials marked "Manhattan Project, MIT" have been found in Massachusetts Bay by fishermen.

Toxic, chemical, and radioactive wastes were dumped in the 1950s and 1960s in the area where the two LNG terminals would be built, and these wastes could be dredged up during construction and disturbed during operation of the LNG terminals.

The LNG companies, Northeast Gateway and Neptune LNG, should be responsible for proving the safety of the Massachusetts Bay sites, but their strategy from the beginning has been to avoid all mention of radioactive wastes. Finally, in April, 2007, Neptune LNG retested some old sediment samples for radionuclides. This is comparable to testing your bones for radioactive particles when you should be testing the X-ray machine itself. It's not the rays but the particles that remain dangerous, and the particles are encased in concrete in unknown condition at the bottom of the sea.

"Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence."

SWIM's comments on radioactive wastes are on the federal docket, #22219 (Northeast Gateway). The docket is accessible at <http://dms.dot.gov/search/searchFormSimple.cfm>.

You can see proof that radioactive wastes were dumped in Massachusetts Bay in the 1950s by searching the docket for testimony sent in by Alessandro Cagiati. In addition, there is documentation of the fact that "quantities of radioactive material" from activities conducted from 1942 to 1948 were found in Beverly, since the portions on land were cleaned up, as described in the Federal Register, Vol. 68, No. 203/Tuesday, October 21, 2003, pages 60097 to 60098). I don't know of any proof that World War II radioactive waste was dumped in Massachusetts Bay – if any records were kept, I'm sure they were classified. (The Neptune LNG information is on docket #22611.)

At the Town of Nahant's web site, <http://www.nahant.org/community/swim.shtml> you can read a brief summary of SWIM's position, but our energies have gone more into comment at public hearings than into keeping up a website. SWIM is an all-volunteer civic environmental group, working since 1984 to protect the ocean around Nahant (a peninsula) and beyond. I am attaching a map of the LNG area and a diagram indicating the configuration of the LNG ships.

The National Marine Fisheries Service suggested that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission might be able to address SWIM's concerns. Ship strikes, accidents, terrorism, explosions, entanglement, damage to essential fish habitat, water quality degradation and increase of global warming caused by high levels of carbon dioxide emitted during operation of the terminals – all are dangers. So are collisions caused by the narrowing of the shipping lanes. However, it is dangers from the old radioactive waste dump that SWIM hopes the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will address. SWIM is concerned about the 1950s dumping, but our worries have taken a quantum leap with the knowledge of refining of uranium during World War II.

Can you find out what wastes were dumped in the 1950s? Can you find out more about the disposal of uranium refined for the Hiroshima atomic bomb? Were any records kept? After all these years, has the nuclear waste from Manhattan Project work in Beverly, Lynn, and Cambridge, Massachusetts simply gone missing?

We are depending on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to protect the safety of our food supply and to perhaps save our critically endangered whales from extinction.

Sincerely yours,

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION EMAIL REPLY TO SWIM

May 14, 2007

Ms. Bradley,

I am in receipt of the information you provided and I have forwarded it to cognizant personnel in the NRC's Office of Federal and State Materials and Environmental Management Programs (FSME). FSME is making efforts to locate information that will be responsive to your questions. Please understand that, due to the age of the issues to which you refer, related information may not be readily available and some delay may be experienced if the retrieval of archived data is necessary. We will try to respond to your questions directly, if possible, or for matters over which our agency may not have regulatory authority, we will provide you with contact information for other organizations that retain jurisdiction.

I apologize for not responding to you sooner.

David J. Vito  
NRC Office of Enforcement  
301-415-3121

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