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General Comment

Over the course of a lifetime, one will be exposed to natural sources of radiation that are unavoidable. Sunlight, cosmic rays, radon, and decaying uranium entombed in granite stone. Observations made by Dr. Tony Phillips of spaceweather.com show that a single flight across the country can expose one to a full years worth of radiation. In our extremely mobile society, avoiding this exposure is difficult. Many people are exposed multiple times a year to these kinds of levels, some multiple times a week. Some people are exposed to elevated levels of radiation via their jobs. They have made a calculated risk assessment and made their choice based on how much exposure they are willing to subject themselves and their families to for an appropriate benefit. These people are given facts and weigh the options, then make a decision based on these facts assuming what science has shown conclusively for many years- greater exposure to radiation will result in an increased likelihood of poor health and disease. The United States government has relocated entire island communities due to increased radiation from fallout from nuclear testing gone awry. An increase in radiation was shown to be detrimental to these people and many millions of dollars were spent to move these people away from their homes to new homes on another island. Against their will, we relocated these people to preserve their health. When a nuclear power plant is decommissioned at the end of its natural lifetime, the grounds are cleansed and machinery disposed of appropriately to ensure a minimal amount of radiological debris is released. This is to ensure the health of people living near the grounds now, and preserve the health of future generations due to the longevity of these decaying elements. Unlike an oil spill, radiological contamination will have an effect on

people living in the contaminated area many hundreds of years into the future. And, as history shows, if a government changes, some facts and procedures may be forgotten. Some hundreds of years into the future thousands of lives could be horribly devastated by carelessness in action today.

That thought alone gives me pause. To think we could be responsible for death and disease of people thousands of years from now makes me ill. Not knowing our names, possibly even the flag of the country we proudly live under, we are destroying lives yet unborn.

Cherry picking scientific studies to make a conclusion sound plausible is done often. Electrical generation via wind power or coal fire or nuclear power... each can be made to look like the best option during any debate for any reason, be it environmental or national security. Sometime the motives of individuals or companies or organizations can be less than pure. Profit can make short term risks seem worth the exposure if the outcome benefits are substantial. No one is so ignorant to believe this never happens. This proposed change seems to be one of those conclusions. In order to lessen the liability of a group or company, to disregard the required expenditures to clean up a mistake, or to skirt responsibility that was known before hand, coloring something like radiation as beneficial and just part of nature instead of the conclusions reached since the birth of the atomic bomb, that radiation at all levels leads to increases in death and disease, is irresponsible and possibly criminal.

With such an elusive and 'mystical' energy, radiation of all types must be regarded as a poison. If we change that view to anything else, we run the risk of permanent damage to air water and sky. We run the risk of changing what it means to be human.

We must protect the future. We believe our knowledge is superior and are like gods of science. We can do no wrong. As our knowledge increases from here, we may find that when we released the genie, we began our own demise. Unable to reverse the damage done, decisions made today may be the difference between uninhabitable regions and uninhabitable planet.

Let us keep a watchful eye on those who handle such a powerful and useful tool to make profits. With the potential to destroy life on such a large and lingering scale, zero tolerance should be the ultimate goal. My grandchildren will thank you.

Thank you for your consideration,
Jack Charbonneau
Kansas City, KS