

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: August 23, 2023

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See Letter and Appendices A to E at <https://www.grassrootsinfo.org/stopholtec>

300 Groups, Elected Officials & Residents Call on Governor, Attorney General and State Agencies to Apply Good Government & Right to Know Practices with a State-Led Process on Indian Point Reactors Pollution Immediately Investigate the Site in Light of Alarming Whistleblower Report

Release Little-Known 1958 Department of Health Study, Clean Water Act State Right's Provision, Whistleblower Report from Holtec Pilgrim Reactor

Organizations and elected officials sent a letter to the Governor, Attorney General, and the Departments of Environmental Conservation, Health and Public Service today commending the Governor for signing the discharge ban bill and requesting an immediate investigation at the Holtec Indian Point reactor site in light of nearly 60 years of plant operations and yesterday's whistleblower report at another Holtec reactor. They also requested the State lead an environmentally sound waste management process to address Holtec Indian Point reactors' wastewater and any off-site pollution.

The letter revealed new legal and environmental information and included the following requests:

- **State-Led Waste Management Process on Indian Point reactors wastewater storage.**
- **Conduct Ecosystem Off-site Study to investigate pollution after 59 years of reactors' operations.**
- **State has legal right to halt reactor discharges to Hudson River under little-known federal *Part 131 Antidegradation Clean Water Act provision*.**
- **Immediate investigation of Indian Point site activities in light of Holtec Pilgrim whistleblower letter.**

The groups first called on the Departments of Environmental Conservation, Health and Public Service to immediately investigate Holtec's activities at the Indian Point site in light of an alarming new report from a whistleblower at the Holtec Pilgrim reactor who stated that they are heating the tritium contaminated wastewater so it evaporates and releasing the polluted air into the environment. The worker stated in an August 21, 2023 letter:

"I am writing this letter to inform you of a breach of trust regarding the promise made by Pilgrim Station Management to not discharge 1 million gallons of contaminated water ... [The staff were directed to] install evaporators ... and boil-away the water volume. The heating elements raise the temperature of the contaminated water to ... approximately 117F." The evaporated water is then discharged "as an airborne release to the environment."

<https://files.constantcontact.com/4ef44f21401/e0e77198-a227-4c8b-8fb5-c8324c7221b6.pdf>

“The State should conduct a robust waste management on-site storage process with Hudson Valley Community Advisory and Independent Expert Committees to ensure the radioactive wastewater is isolated from the environment,” said **Anne Rabe, Environmental Policy Director, New York Public Interest Research Group**. “Equally important, is a state-led investigation to test for any past pollution of the Hudson River ecosystem after 59 years of nuclear power plant operations. This study should be compared to a newly discovered Department of Health 1958 baseline study conducted before the reactor started which tested air, water, soil, fish, wildlife and cow’s milk in a 20 mile radius around the site.”

"Mbuy Mbumasuwaakanum is Water is Life in Munsee, the original language of the Hudson River. Mahicannituk means The River That Flows Both Ways, which is the original name for the Hudson River," said **Attorney S.D. Smith, advisor to the Ramapo Munsee Nation**. "As Keepers of the Ramapo Pass we have a duty to respect and protect the Mahicannituk. We call upon all for whom the Hudson River is home and allies to respect and protect our water and air. New York State has the legal authority and tools to protect the Hudson River. One of those tools is the Antidegradation Part 131 regulatory provision of the Clean Water Act which mandates that all states can prevent degradation to maintain and protect water quality. This supports the recently signed discharge ban bill, and we call on the State to now investigate any and all offsite pollution."

“Holtec wanted to dump a million gallons of tritium-contaminated water into the Hudson River,” said **Dr. Gordon Edwards, an international expert on nuclear energy and waste**, member of the Canadian Committee for Nuclear Responsibility and a retired Professor of Science & Mathematics at Vanier College. “Tritium makes water molecules radioactive, and it cannot be removed. Tritium causes cancer and damages eggs and sperm. It makes organic molecules of living things radioactive, including DNA. Tritium is incorporated into the bodies of unborn babies. Tritium should not be dumped into a source of drinking water.”

“Governor Hochul is a leader of people power by signing the Save the Hudson bill,” said **Tina Volz-Bongar of United For Clean Energy and the STOP HOLTEC Coalition**. “The people power is: 446,526 signatures to halt dumping on change.org, 35 municipalities passing resolutions to stop it; 138 environmental organizations signed our STOP HOLTEC Coalition petition. Now over 300 organizations and elected officials have signed on to support a strong on-site state-led waste management process with full public participation. We have excellent New York State agencies to take this measure on, and I believe she will listen to the people once again.”

“Thankfully we stopped the Hudson from being used as a radioactive sewer—now we need New York State to take the lead in ensuring proper monitoring and maintenance of all the tons of nuclear waste at Indian Point, ” said **Attorney Susan Shapiro of LEAF of Hudson Valley**. “Decommissioning is an experimental new field and unfortunately Holtec has very little, if any, experience decommissioning nuclear reactors—let alone Indian Point which holds the nation’s largest inventory of commercial radioactive nuclear waste. Going forward we ask that Governor Holcul lead the way, in our state and nation, in establishing long term safety, monitoring, and financial systems to ensure protection for future generations of our air and waterways, our Hudson River that flows both ways and Lake Ontario on which the rest of New York’s nuclear fleet is located.”

"Enacting the 'Save the Hudson' bill was the first critical step in this science-driven process," said **Ellen Weininger, Director of Educational Outreach at Grassroots Environmental Education**. "Now New York State needs to take immediate steps to develop a responsible, rigorous, and transparent plan that includes safe and secure on-site waste management and storage, thorough wastewater testing and other science-based solutions and policies with full public input. Our state and federal statutes provide the clear authority and framework for the State to fulfill its most fundamental role, which is to protect our communities and our precious water supplies."

"Governor Hochul signing the ban discharge bill is the first step," said **Suzannah Glidden, United for Clean Energy**. "Now to learn how to safely store it onsite after we learn from state testing exactly what's in the wastewater and the ecosystem, as this exciting next step will accomplish."

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