

**For Immediate Release: April 26, 2012 (26<sup>th</sup> annual commemoration of Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe)**

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## General Electric Stockholders Seek Freeze on 23 U.S. Fukushima-Design Reactors

Detroit, Michigan – Yesterday, Kevin Kamps, Radioactive Waste Watchdog at Beyond Nuclear, based in Takoma Park, MD ([www.beyondnuclear.org](http://www.beyondnuclear.org)) told GE shareholders at the company's annual meeting that "The high-level radioactive waste storage pool at Fukushima Daiichi Unit 4 is at precarious risk of failure, which would lead to a fire and catastrophic radioactivity release even worse than what has already occurred, due to the lack of radiological containment over the pool." Kamps emphasized that "The Fermi 2 pool, 35 miles south of Detroit, contains far more high-level radioactive waste than Fukushima Daiichi Units 1 to 4 put together, and is itself an accident waiting to happen. With the loss of ability to circulate water, the Fermi 2 irradiated nuclear fuel pool could begin to boil off in 4.2 hours." [Please see [www.nrc.gov](http://www.nrc.gov), upper right corner: search for ML993440109 and ML072360053]

Don't Waste Michigan's Michael Keegan of Monroe, MI cautioned GE shareholders about the potential " 'Cauldron of Culpability' and the 'Specter of Liability' that GE could face now that it is known that these GE Mark I Reactors will consistently fail catastrophically as they demonstrated at Fukushima. In 1976 three General Electric engineers came forward and testified before Congress, concerning flaws in the GE Mark I design. We have seen the outcome at Fukushima, we came today in hopes of prevention. General Electric can no longer fain the excuse that they did not know. The world knows."

Patricia Birnie, Chair of the GESA (GE Stockholders' Alliance), urges GE shareowners to learn about the dangers and risks of nuclear energy. At Wednesday's GE Annual Meeting in Detroit, there was a 2.4% supporting vote for [the shareowner proposal urging GE to withdraw from nuclear energy](#). This proposal was submitted by the

GESA, an association of individual and institutional GE stockholders who are opposed to nuclear power. The organization strongly supports GE's solar, wind and geothermal energy businesses, and endorses GE's energy efficiency endeavors.

[While all operating reactors routinely emit radioactive gases and liquids](#), on a daily basis during normal operation, the aging GE Mark I reactors are particularly at risk for accidents due to long-known, but still un-remediated design flaws. Twenty-two of the 23 flawed GE Mark I reactors have already received 20-year operating license extensions from the NRC. The only exception, Fermi 2, is expected to apply for a 20 year license extension in 2014. [A chart of these 23 reactors with their new license expiration dates can be accessed at the Beyond Nuclear web site.](#)

GESA's Birnie urges members of the public to join "[Freeze Our Fukushimas](#)," a national campaign launched by Beyond Nuclear to permanently suspend the operations of the 23 General Electric Mark I Boiling Water Reactors, the same flawed design as those that melted down at Fukushima Daiichi in Japan. [A Beyond Nuclear pamphlet lists the names and locations of the 23 operating Mark Is in the U.S.](#)

Birnie invites sympathetic GE stockholders to join the GESA in their ongoing efforts to convince GE to withdraw from nuclear energy. She can be contacted at [PatBirnie@greenbicycle.net](mailto:PatBirnie@greenbicycle.net).

GE Chairman, Jeffrey Immelt, closed the GE Stockholders Annual Meeting by denying any liability. The very last thing he said was "I want to make one final comment on nuclear reactors. We believe in the safe design of the GE nuclear reactors, the company has no liability as was misstated earlier. I just want to make sure that we say that for the record. Thank you Detroit, thank you GE Stockholders, the meeting is now adjourned."

Michael Keegan, a GESA presenter, added "Methinks thou dost protest too much."

Victor Macks, another GESA presenter, summed up his testimony by stating "The design and continued manufacture of nuclear power is a moral failure only equaled by the production of nuclear weapons."

[The audio record from yesterday's GE Shareholders Annual Meeting](#) documents the GESA presenters' testimonies. [Kamps at 25:00-30:00 / Keegan 30:20 - 34:20 / Macks at 53:20 – 55:25]

David Kraft, with Nuclear Energy Information Service in Chicago, says that he considers the GESA request reasonable, given what GE Chair/CEO Jeffrey Immelt has previously said about nuclear power:

"If you were a utility CEO and looked at your world today, you would just do gas and wind," Mr. [Jeffrey] Immelt says. "You would say [they are] easier to site, digestible today [and] I don't have to bet my company on any of this stuff. You would never do nuclear. The economics are overwhelming." -- Jeffrey Immelt, chairman and chief executive of General Electric, "US utilities are skeptical over nuclear energy revival," *Financial Times*, Nov. 19, 2007

On the very same day as the GE Annual Meeting, [the Civil Society Insitute released survey results showing that the "partisan divide" on energy issues is a myth, and that strong bipartisan support is seen for the shift to cleaner energy.](#) Among the survey's findings:

- Four out five Americans (80 percent) – including 78 percent of Republicans, 83 percent of Independents, and 82 percent of Democrats -- oppose the use by utilities in some states of advance billing – known as "Construction Work in Progress" – to pay for the construction of new nuclear and other power plants. Only 13 percent agree that "ratepayers should pay for electricity they use, and construction of nuclear reactors and other power plants that may come on line in the future."

- Eight out of 10 Americans think U.S. taxpayers and ratepayers should not "finance the construction of new nuclear power reactors in the United States through tens of billions of dollars in proposed new federal loan guarantees." Three out of four Americans (76 percent) would support "a shift of federal loan-guarantee support for energy away from nuclear reactors and towards clean, renewable energy, such as wind and solar."