



March 2022 *CRAFT Times* vol. 9 no. 3 Three New Violations to Fermi

After completing an end-of-the-year inspection, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issued three violations to DTE, owner/operator of Fermi. Two of the violations were of low safety significance, and one was more severe.

One violation was improper storage of material in the auxiliary building: “Contrary to plant procedures, equipment over four hundred pounds was secured to a handrail adjacent to a floor opening on the fifth floor. When challenged by the inspectors, the equipment was moved. However, a few days later, the inspectors found that someone had moved the equipment back to the same location.” (Fermi’s spent fuel pool is on the fifth floor.)

Another was “for the licensee’s failure to report to the NRC their discovery that the high-pressure coolant injection (HPCI) pump was inoperable.” This was severe because it is a ‘single-train’ system without back-up.

The third, “licensee failed to maintain the ability to accurately declare emergency action level (EAL) classification due to errors in the spent fuel pool water level EAL thresholds.”

This has a history from 2014 when DTE applied for a license amendment request that used the top of the spent fuel racks as a reference for identifying the EAL threshold. DTE submitted that threshold value at 15 feet. That didn’t quite work, so DTE issued an order stating, “if there is a leak in the Spent Fuel Pool and the level is dropping and reaches the bottom of the scale and stops moving, and it is known that there was no repair or change to the leak, then it is to be assumed that the level

Citizens’ Resistance at Fermi Two

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has reached the 15 feet and a Site Area Emergency should be declared.” Now, the level is set at 16 feet.



Fukushima is Still Dangerous

And is an example of the danger that Fermi poses to us. Fukushima was the same reactor model as Fermi with waste stored on the fifth floor.

Fermi Scrammed and is Refueling

On February 4th, “the reactor automatically scrambled (shut itself down) due to low Reactor water level due to a transient of the Feedwater System...” stated the Event Notification that DTE filed with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). “Decay Heat is being removed by the Main Steam system to the main condenser using the Turbine Bypass Valves.”

Fermi began operating at less than 100% power in November, with levels fluctuating, and by December, Fermi was down-powered to 58%, which I believe is the lowest a reactor can go and still stay on the grid. We asked the Nuclear Regulatory Commission why Fermi was not running at full power, and they gave a lame answer that it would go down for refueling in February.

I repeated my question about vibrations from a damaged rotor that was supposed to be replaced last outage, but it wasn’t. The NRC told me again that Fermi was down-powering for the outage.

During the refueling, workers will replace about a third of the fuel rods and complete thousands of maintenance and testing activities which cannot be done while the reactor is operating.



DTE to Kill Rooftop Solar?

DTE Energy has filed with the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) permission to charge future customers in the residential solar program called “distributed generation,” a fee based on the three highest 60-minute demands of that customer in the past year.

DTE is also proposing to slash the bill credits that current rooftop solar customers get for exporting their excess solar energy onto the grid. A similar program is in operation in Ohio. Want to know how that is going?

“This is exactly what the Bowling Green Municipal Utility did to me last year, added a monthly penalty based on the number of kilowatts and slashed the amount paid for the electricity in half,” said Joseph DeMare, a solar customer. “As a result, I lost money last month, paying more in penalties than my panels generated.”

DTE said it will voluntarily increase the current 1% cap on the number of rooftop solar customers to 3% IF the charges are granted. (*Didn't that used to be called blackmail, extortion, or something?*)

DOE Funds Existing Reactors

The Department of Energy’s (DOE) Office Nuclear Energy announced a \$6.5 billion program to aid owners and operators of commercial nuclear

reactors by allowing them to apply for “credits” by a sealed bid process.

Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm said that nuclear reactors are essential. The DOE is also allowing governments and tribes to apply for the credits also, whatever they are.

Senators Oppose Canadian Waste

This seems like Déjà vu to me, but Michigan U.S. Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters have introduced a resolution opposing Canada’s placement of a permanent nuclear waste storage site near the Great Lakes.

For example, in the press release associated with the resolution, Senator Peters said, “It’s simple: hazardous nuclear waste should not be stored anywhere near the Great Lakes.”

However, in more than one letter responding to CRAFT’s no-nukes messages, he states, “Nuclear power continues to be an important part of Michigan’s energy mix...” and then goes on to list the pro-nuke bills he has voted for in the Senate.

It seems like just publicity to oppose Canada putting nuclear waste miles underground while Michigan’s nuclear reactors have their waste above ground sitting in cement casks on the shores of the Great Lakes. We see that as danger and wonder why our senators are simply fine with it.

New Mexico Says Sustainable

New Mexico regulators approved a plan that calls for new solar generation to replace electricity when the Public Service Co. of New Mexico stops buying electricity from the Palo Verde nuclear reactor in Arizona when their lease expires.

Government officials are being slow to approve the plan, citing Covid-19, etc. It is likely they do not want to set a precedent for others to cancel contracts with nukes. Stay tuned; yay New Mexico!

DTE and Your Electric Bill

Tom Perkins authored a lengthy article in *Planet Detroit* explaining our DTE electric bills and other tidbits. Here are some article quotes:

“In 2018, DTE Electric customers collectively paid an additional \$650 million to satisfy the company’s investor obligations. That added about an additional \$13 on the average electric user’s monthly bill, or about \$156 annually.”

“The company also uses its charitable arm, the DTE Energy Foundation, to effectively put community leaders on its payroll.” Then he adds the name of a Detroit preacher who gets money from the foundation and then testifies for them. <https://planetdetroit.org/2021/12/understanding-your-energy-utility-in-the-climate-change-era/>



Nuclear Emergency Classifications

There are four classifications for a nuclear emergency and here they are: 1. Unusual Event, the least serious meaning a minor problem at the reactor; 2. Alert, this is an event that could become problematic, and officials must be notified; 3. Site Area Emergency, a more serious accident has occurred at the reactor, and DTE would activate their emergency operation center; and 4. General Emergency, a large amount of radiation is being released and radio/tv stations will broadcast information and instructions.

Why the Campaign Insert?

Michigan Sen. Dale Zorn, D-Monroe, has reached his term limit and his seat in the 16th District is up for grabs. Two candidates have announced their bids for it, Katybeth Davis (D) and Joe Bellino (R).

“Joe currently is the chair of the House Energy Committee. In the committee is a pro solar bill that removes the cap on solar interconnections,” said Mark Hagerty of Michigan Solar Solutions. “Joe has refused to bring it up for a vote. He is the representative from the Monroe area where DTE is the largest employer and taxpayer.”

We, at CRAFT, see Bellino as a threat to continued growth of sustainable energy in Michigan - and he is trying to kill Michigan’s bottle bill. Katybeth is a progressive candidate who we would much rather see represent that district in Lansing. That is why we have her insert.

Next month, we will spotlight Rob Kull, the candidate for the newly created House Seat #28.

Feds Rescind License Extensions!

In an unprecedented act, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has reversed a decision to allow two South Florida nuclear reactors (Turkey Point, Units 1 & 2) a license to run 80 years.

The NRC did so by ordering a new review of potential environmental risks, like climate change. The reactors have been operating since 1972 and 1973 and were given the first license extension to run for 80 years. That decision was legally challenged by Beyond Nuclear (BN).

“The NRC made that decision relying on an environmental impact statement prepared in 1996,” said Diane Curran, BN attorney. “The decision is a tremendous advance for nuclear reactor safety and environmental protection.”

The license for Pennsylvania’s Peach Bottom reactor was also rescinded, but Dominion Energy’s Surry reactor extension was not named.

CRAFT Public Zoom Meeting

This is an invitation to attend a zoom meeting with the CRAFT Steering Committee Team on Thursday March 17th from 5:30-6:30 p.m. We are not yet having In-Person meetings, but zoom is good. Here is the link for the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6559569802?pwd=ajMvRE5TNmVJaW1iWIRJalV2dnhZdz09>

Feb. Fermi Documents Received

= **ML22027A361**. Fermi 1’s inspection plan for 2022. Looks like business as usual.

<https://adamswebsearch2.nrc.gov/webSearch2/main.jsp?AccessionNumber=ML22027A361>

= **Event Number 55732**. Fermi scrambled due to low Rector water level. See article, page 1.

<https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/event-status/event/2022/20220207en.html#en55732>
 = ML22032A157. Changes to Fermi’s Technical Requirements Manual.
<https://adamswebsearch2.nrc.gov/webSearch2/main.jsp?AccessionNumber=ML22032A157>
 = ML22048A493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504. All reports of workers testing positive for alcohol or drugs. These are the lists of Fermi’s workers, but the NRC library would not let me open them. It was the same for other reactors’ list of workers’ positive tests.

Russians Take Chernobyl Reactor

Why? We do not know. The Chernobyl reactor is the site of the world's worst nuclear disaster, which took place in 1986 after one of its reactors exploded. The reactor sits on the border with Belarus and is directly north of Kyiv.

“Ukraine was one of the biggest nuclear powers in the world until 1994, when Ukraine was asked to give up its arsenal,” said Kate Brown, award winning author on Chernobyl. “They had nuclear missiles along the western border of Ukraine from the Cold War period, and the Clinton administration negotiated that those bombs go to Russia. Ukraine was given some financial aid at the time to make that happen, and they were given a promise that all the parties, which included Russia and the United States, would protect Ukraine’s national sovereignty. I think this would be a very different scenario if Ukraine still had those weapons.”

Ukraine does have fifteen working reactors besides the four closed Chernobyl units. The closed reactors belonged to Holtec for decommissioning – but the Russians own them now.

THINGS THAT DON'T EXIST:



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