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Fermi 2 atomic reactor 20-year license extension challenged

Citizen groups raise safety, environmental contentions

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Monroe County, MI—A coalition of environmental groups have officially intervened against the application by DTE (Detroit Edison) to extend the operating license at its Fermi 2 atomic reactor for an additional 20 years, to 2045. Fermi 2's operating license is currently set to expire in 2025. The groups met the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) strict deadline of 11:59:59 Eastern time on August 18th for the filing of intervention petitions and requests for hearings on safety and environmental contentions.

[Beyond Nuclear](#) has joined with [Citizens Environment Alliance of Southwestern Ontario](#) and Don't Waste Michigan, to file [four contentions](#) against Fermi 2's license extension.

Two of the contentions concern high-level radioactive waste, and two are about reactor risks.

"Fermi 2's irradiated nuclear fuel storage pool is at risk of catching fire, and releasing catastrophic amounts of hazardous radioactivity" said Terry Lodge, the Toledo-based attorney representing the coalition. "Fermi 2's storage pool holds over 600 tons of irradiated nuclear fuel, more than the 419 tons stored in all four destroyed units at Fukushima Daiichi put together," Lodge added.

"Fermi 2 is the largest General Electric Mark I Boiling Water Reactor in the world," said Michael Keegan, board member of Don't Waste Michigan based in Monroe. "The long-known safety risks of this reactor design and its too small, too weak containment were tragically on full display for all the world to see at Fukushima Daiichi, Japan in March 2011," Keegan stated.

"Fermi 2's proximity to the proposed new Fermi 3, including their common transmission corridor, represents the worst of both worlds," said Kevin Kamps of Beyond Nuclear in Takoma Park, Maryland. "Fermi 2's age-degraded breakdown phase risks, combined with Fermi 3's untested break-in phase risks, would result in a risky game of radioactive Russian roulette on the Great Lakes shore for decades to come," Kamps added.