

Written Testimony of Pam McDonald

From Simsbury, CT - Board Member of Connecticut's *People's Action for Clean Energy* (PACE)
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Energy and Technology Committee
March 15, 2011

I fully support genuinely clean and flexible energy sources. There is no doubt that we need to invest intelligently in our energy future and we need to do it now. In my opinion, that means investing in wind, and solar and other clean sources of energy. PACE has been supporting the grassroots development of clean energy, through public tours of homes designed with sustainable energy features, including some net-zero homes, as well as other projects for over 25 years. At the grassroots level, our efforts have been very successful. We continue to work hard at the state and national level with some significant results; I understand that Connecticut is 3rd in the nation in its development of genuinely green energy options.

Today, particularly with the plausible specter of a nuclear meltdown incident in a reactor that uses MOX fuel in Japan, I am concerned about the lack of information being made available to the average citizen and to our legislative representatives. Our most trusted decision-makers have lacked necessary information for making informed decisions. How can this be? Our citizens lack this information, even with round the clock news coverage. Why? I do not know the answer to this question, but I believe it is one of the most important questions we face.

Senator Lieberman, a staunch supporter of nuclear energy made a statement last Sunday, on "Face the Nation" in the wake of the unfolding Japanese nuclear power plant disasters [and I quote]

I have been a big supporter ... of nuclear power ... but I think we've got to quietly, quickly put the brakes on until we can absorb what has happened in Japan as a result of the earthquake and the tsunami and then see what more if anything we can demand of the new power plants that are coming online. ... We've got 104 nuclear power plants in America now. I was informed this morning that twenty-three of them are built according to designs that are similar to the nuclear power plants in Japan that are now the focus of our concern." [end quote]

A high-level administrator at the National Nuclear Security Administration, William Tobey, was quoted yesterday on NPR's program, *Marketplace*:

"The lesson is, what may appear to be one-in-a-million odds, because they seem like independent probabilities, may not be [independent probabilities]."

Our experience within a single lifetime is fully demonstrating that these probabilities, for whatever reason, are probably NOT independent. Three Mile Island should not have been possible. Fukushima should not have been possible. Even Chernobyl should not have been as possible as it turned out to be.

It is vitally important for ALL of us, from experts with decades of experience, to legislators, to everyday citizens of Connecticut, to demand detailed information about the Fukushima event, and about nuclear power generation as it relates to our decision-making about currently operating plants, and about plans to build any new plants in our state.

Factual information about Fukushima can be gleaned from a March 13, 2011 7:30JST panel discussion at *the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan*, established in 1945.

Lead speaker: Masashi Goto, who was responsible for the design of the containment vessel for the Fukushima nuclear reactors. Goto did testing to test the strength of the containment vessels at the Fukushima nuclear reactor complex to see that they had the strength to withstand high pressures. A rough transcript is forthcoming. Please ask me for it.

http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/13295291#utm_campaign=synclibkback&source=http://cnic.jp/modules/news/article.php?storyid=1009&medium=13295291

William Toby – Senior Fellow, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard and former Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation at the National Nuclear Security Administration.