

**News from Beyond Nuclear
For Immediate Release**

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**43 Groups to Michigan State Legislators: Oppose \$300 Million Bailout to
Restart Closed Palisades “Zombie” Atomic Reactor**

*Organizations Cite Astronomical Expense and Extreme Risk of Unprecedented
Scheme*

Covert Township, Michigan, June 28, 2023—A year to the day after Holtec International took ownership of the Palisades atomic reactor in Van Buren County on the Lake Michigan shore, 43 Indigenous, climate, environmental, Great Lakes and water protection, environmental and social and racial justice, religious, peace, taxpayer, and other public interest organizations have written a [letter](#) to all 148 Michigan state legislators, urging opposition to the company’s request for a \$300 million state taxpayer grant. Holtec would use the state funding to leverage additional subsidies, including another above market rate Power Purchase Agreement from the Michigan Public Service Commission, as well as billions of dollars in federal taxpayer giveaways. Holtec has already begun pressuring the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to approve an unprecedented reversal of the previous “cessation of operations” and permanent removal of fuel from the reactor core, certified by the agency more than a year ago.

Signers of the letter include the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter, the largest environmental group in the Great Lakes State, with 150,000 members and supporters. Indigenous endorsers include the Board of Directors of the statewide Anishinaabek Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party, as well as the Native American-led Citizens’ Resistance at Fermi Two (CRAFT), based in Redford. Michigan Climate Action Network, Washtenaw350, Benton Harbor Community Water Council, Clean Water Action Michigan, FLOW (For Love of Water), Freshwater Future, and Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation are some of the dozens of climate, Great Lakes and water protector groups that have signed on, including the national group Food & Water Watch, with members and supporters in Michigan. Environmental justice organizations endorsing the letter include Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition and Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice. The letter, including the full listing of signatories, representing hundreds of thousands of Michiganders, is posted online here: <https://beyondnuclear.org/43-groups-to-michigan-state-legislators-oppose-300-million-bailout-to-restart-closed-palisades-zombie-atomic-reactor/>.

“Holtec’s request for \$300,000,000 from the State of Michigan can be regarded as a ticket purchase in the Holtec lottery, betting on a firm with zero experience in the unprecedented scheme of bringing back a ‘zombie reactor’ from the dead, much less actually operating such a

high-risk reactor as Palisades, on which Holtec will have cut maximum corners to get it back online,” said Terry Lodge, long time legal counsel for grassroots environmental campaigns to shut down Palisades for good.

“Holtec’s demand for state bailouts from taxpayers and ratepayers amounts to extortion, and is unacceptable. There has been no due diligence,” said Michael Keegan, with Don't Waste Michigan.

A congressional briefing hosted by the Samuel Lawrence Foundation on June 2, 2023 featured a panel of national experts who warned about the opportunity costs of nuclear power as a false, supposed (but dead end) “solution” to the worsening climate crisis.

“As important as these monetary and energy policy issues are, the coalition’s primary concerns are safety, security, health, and the environment,” said Kevin Kamps, radioactive waste specialist at Beyond Nuclear. “Palisades has long been infamous for its many dire safety risks, including: the worst embrittled reactor pressure vessel in the country; a reactor lid and steam generators that have needed replacement for decades; and uniquely bad, chronic control rod drive mechanism seal leaks,” Kamps added.

The letter cited a 1982 Nuclear Regulatory Commission commissioned study, that predicted shocking casualty and property damage figures in the event of a reactor core meltdown at Palisades: a thousand peak early fatalities (acute radiation poisoning deaths), 7,000 peak early radiation injuries, 10,000 peak cancer deaths (latent cancer fatalities), and \$52.6 billion in property damage. Indexing to 2023 dollar values, the property damage figure would now surpass \$163 billion.

And, as Associated Press investigative journalist Jeff Donn reported in his four-part series “Aging Nukes” in 2012, populations have increased around U.S. atomic reactors in the past four decades, meaning death and injury projections would likewise increase in the event of a catastrophic release of hazardous radioactivity.

“Palisades’ Lake Michigan shoreline location imperils the Great Lakes downstream,” Kamps said. “Placing 21% of the world’s, and 84% of North America’s, surface fresh water at risk, due to Holtec’s insatiable greed, is a reckless ‘game’ of radioactive Russian roulette,” Kamps concluded.