

## Two articles by Alec Baldwin about the dangers and lies of nuclear power

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### The Truth About Nuclear Power in Utility Reactors

**Alec Baldwin** Posted on HuffPost Green: February 22, 2010

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alec-baldwin/the-truth-about-nuclear-p\\_b\\_471652.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alec-baldwin/the-truth-about-nuclear-p_b_471652.html)

It was in 1996 that I was first contacted by an organization called the Standing for Truth About Radiation (STAR) Foundation. The Long Island-based group, a loose bundle of veterans of the anti-nuclear movement, local artists, businessmen with large investments in second homes on the East End and scientists with a career-long dedication to the issue were attempting to raise awareness about the Brookhaven National Laboratory and its nuclear-powered research facility, the High Flux Beam Reactor.

The reactor operations at Brookhaven were reported to have released billions of gallons of tritiated water into the headwaters of the Peconic River during the period of its operations from 1965 to 1996. BNL, the U.S. Army's former Camp Upton and the site of decades-long research into all things nuclear, had been the base of operations for some of the earliest work on the atomic bomb. A coalition of different community groups had been opposing the HFBR at BNL for years. Pro-business lobbying groups warned that closing the reactor would have dire consequences to the Long Island economy, as national laboratories, with their high-skill, high-paying jobs, were viewed as "sexy" components of any area's business landscape. Opponents of BNL pointed out that levels of soft tissue cancers and rare diseases such as rhabdomyosarcoma were extraordinarily higher adjacent to the water recharge area near the lab. More effectively, the anti-BNL groups pointed out that Long Islanders had already voiced their opinion of having nuclear reactors in the area when they agreed to absorb the unconscionable amount of money necessary to shutter the Shoreham nuclear power plant several years earlier.

The Long Island Lighting Company, one of the most horrifically mismanaged public utilities in U.S. history, had thrown the switch and already gone "online" with a utility reactor on the North Shore of Suffolk County, a decision that represented a game of chicken with the area's rate payers. Once the reactor went "hot", any move to shut it down would surely mean hundreds of millions of dollars extra in decommissioning and decontamination costs. Long Island residents said, "Bring it on." Already the highest utility rate payers in the forty-eight contiguous states, LILCO customers absorbed billions in costs, amortized over several years, and Shoreham closed. Soon after that, then Governor George Pataki set up another darling of Albany politicians, a quasi-public authority (the Long Island Power Authority or LIPA) to, among other things, evacuate LILCO's overpaid executives who were responsible for the Shoreham debacle. All the information you could possibly want on this issue was brilliantly covered by one of the greatest journalists in the area, [Karl Grossman](#).

Shoreham was closed because even the Feds could not argue that Long Island had no effective evacuation plan, a vital issue for people who would have to either bottleneck through the biggest city in the U.S. or swim to Connecticut in the event of some disaster. That fear also applied to BNL. Soon, the HFBR was closed as well.

During that time, I became acquainted with Dr. Ernest Sternglass, whose work (studying the accumulation of ambient radioactive materials which mimic calcium in the developing human fetus and, thus, serve as scientifically effective markers for radiological spikes in the atmosphere) helped to leverage the test ban treaty during President Kennedy's administration. Dr.

Sternglass, along with Dr. Jay M. Gould, founded the Radiation and Public Health Project, which I support today. In 1996, during the period where BNL was on one burner, RPHP turned my attention toward the reactor mess in Millstone, Connecticut; Millstone is one of the dirtiest and most often fined reactors in this country. We gathered information about Indian Point, and worried about implications of a containment breach there long before 9/11 heightened that risk. We gathered information about Oak Ridge, Tennessee, The Gaseous Diffusion plant in Piketon, Ohio. The problems with operations at Dresden, Illinois. At Turkey Point in Florida. And we immersed ourselves in the problems surrounding the Oyster Creek facility in Tom's River, New Jersey.

I started going down to Oyster Creek in 1996. I returned there with a *60 Minutes* camera crew a couple of years ago. I have a strong and abiding

belief that true knowledge of what does and does not go on in Tom's River, as well as in both Trenton and Washington, combined with unbiased knowledge about nuclear power in utility reactors could kill any of the talk about reviving this industry. The truth not only could but would kill it, if it were known and were disseminated in the press fairly.

In my next post I will comment on last Saturday's broadcast of Weekend Edition on NPR and how Scott Simon appallingly allowed Stewart Brand to burble on and on with his outrageous pablum about "the new safe and clean nuclear power." I will tell you some of what I have learned during the years I've worked with RPHP down in Tom's River and how I view some of the efforts I have joined, with people like the tireless and courageous Joe Mangano who now heads RPHP, as some of the most important work I have ever undertaken.

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## The Misconception of Nuclear Power

**Alec Baldwin** Posted on Huffington Post: August 10, 2008

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alec-baldwin/the-misconception-of-nucl\\_b\\_118061.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alec-baldwin/the-misconception-of-nucl_b_118061.html)

On a Connecticut public radio program I listened to recently, two guests discussed their views of the growing energy problem overwhelming the US economy. Both pundits, who are political columnists for national magazines, agreed that in addition to conservation measures and an increase in renewable sources, nuclear power is a card that the US must hold in its hand in order to reduce our reliance on foreign oil and our consumption of fossil fuels. Both speakers agreed that nuclear was a good investment, as it was "clean and had almost no carbon footprint."

The contractors who build nuclear power plants, the energy companies who operate them and the banks that underwrite the bonds that fund them are hoping to take that misconception straight to the bank.

Nuclear power is viewed as problematic typically due to issues involving public health and safety. Grave concerns linger to this day about how to safely dispose of nuclear waste. Since 9/11, security issues dominate much of the debate. Many who are more in tune with the realities of how nuclear power is actually produced in the US currently worry about catastrophic breaches of reactors. They also state, with real evidence on their side, that no level of exposure to ambient radiation produced every day at utility sites is healthy for humans, particularly pregnant women and young children. However, many are now willing to ignore, or at the very least table, serious action on these issues because of the false notion that nuclear power is clean.

Even opponents of nuclear power get it wrong on this issue. At a forum held at the Time Warner

offices in New York, Chairman Richard Parsons hosted then Democratic candidate John Edwards in a conversation that included Edwards' opposition to expanding America's nuclear capacity. But even Edwards failed to address the question of "how dirty is the mining and processing of uranium?"

The answer is very dirty. The mining of uranium, like the excavation of any other resource that must be discovered, torn out of the ground and carted away, along with the handling of excess rubble, by heavy equipment, could not be any more polluting. The precious uranium must be taken, by truck, to facilities that themselves require enormous amounts of power in order to process and enrich the radioactive ore into the fissionable material that is used in the reactor that is operated by a utility as a "clean" source of power. The retrieval of any energy resources, whether it be oil, coal or natural gas, requires enormous amounts of energy itself. Even gasoline itself is delivered by trucks that are powered by gasoline. But, along with coal, nothing compares to the mining and processing of uranium. It is an overwhelmingly dirty process on a carbon footprint basis.

Energy companies that are investing in nuclear power by seeking the renewal of the licenses of some of America's aging reactors are counting on the current economic downturn and War-for-Oil fatigue to make the case not only for status quo nuclear capacity, but also for a major expansion of utility reactors across the country. The claim that nuclear power is clean is a lie. And not only due to the carbon-heavy mining and refinement processes, but also due to the complete and incomprehensible avoidance of what to do with the ever-increasing stockpile of its deadly radioactive waste.

In my next post on this subject, I want to share with you some of the work I have been involved with, since 1996, in closing specific reactors, utility and otherwise, and the politics involved with opposing the nuclear industry and their allies in Washington and state houses across the country. In particular, I would like to tell you about Tom's River, New Jersey, the home of Exelon's Oyster Creek reactor, one of the most compromised and dangerous nuclear facilities in the US and what Governor Jon Corzine is doing, and is not doing, to protect the health and safety of the residents of his state.