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Dear Senator Edwards;

As we approach the first votes on the 2008 presidential elections there a number of important issues that have yet to be thoroughly discussed. We are writing to ask you specific questions about three of these issues: **chemical plant security, nuclear power, and protecting our oceans**. Below we have summarized each issue followed by our questions. We are respectfully requesting **your responses by January 2nd** prior to the Iowa Caucuses.

1) CHEMICAL PLANT SECURITY:

Given the vulnerability of thousands of U.S. chemical plants to terrorism, we are asking presidential candidates to explain how they would eliminate these vulnerabilities. According to the DHS there are 4,391 chemical plants that each put 1,000 or more people at risk. About 100 of these plants each put a million or more people at risk. These risks could easily result in thousands of fatalities in a matter of hours following a terrorist attack.

However, the use of inherently safer technologies (IST) can not only eliminate the consequences of an attack, but also protect plant employees and surrounding communities better than conventional security. Neutralizing these hazards also allows finite security resources and personnel to be used at facilities that cannot be converted, such as airports and government buildings.

A well known example is the Washington, D.C. wastewater treatment plant that switched from using deadly chlorine gas to harmless bleach 90 days after the 9/11 attacks. This eliminated a terrorist risk to more than 2 million people at a cost of less than \$0.50 per water customer per year. Over 200 other plants have converted to IST since 9/11 and most did it for less than \$100,000. Unfortunately at this rate it will take over 40 years to convert the most hazardous plants.

To address this, Senator Jon Corzine (D-NJ) introduced a bill in October 2001 that would have required plants to use IST where they were feasible and cost effective. The bill, S.1602 was unanimously adopted by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in July 2001, but was not included in the Homeland Security Act. The U.S. EPA drafted a plan in the summer of 2002 but it was killed by the Bush Administration.

In July 2006, a bi-partisan chemical security bill (H.R. 5695) was adopted by the House Homeland Security Committee. It required the use of IST at high-risk chemical facilities. However, this bill was never brought to the House floor. Instead, a 740 word rider was attached to the Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2007 on behalf of the chemical industry. The new law prohibits the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) from requiring the use of IST at any chemical facility. It also exempts thousands of chemical plants from its regulations.

However, the new law will expire in October 2009. The new Congress has pledged to enact permanent legislation to supersede this law before it expires.

Will you pledge to sign, support and implement legislation and regulations to eliminate the consequences of an attack on a chemical plant by requiring the use of IST at inherently dangerous chemical plants as specified in S. 1602 and H.R. 5695 if you are elected President? If so, will you call on Congress to enact this legislation now?

Chemical plants are some of our most valuable assets – and they are also potential targets for terrorists. A successful attack on one of these plants would be devastating, and we must do everything in our power to protect them and the families who live nearby.

The federal government's failure to require safety precautions at America's chemical plants is a case study of the broken system of Washington. Because of industry pressure, new watered-down security rules imposed by the Bush administration may actually weaken security at many plants.

I support tough new safety standards at chemical plants vulnerable to terrorist attacks. I believe we must go further to ensure that safer technologies are used in chemical plants, states are not restricted from passing tougher security standards, and new rules apply to water facilities that use hazardous chlorine gas.

2) NUCLEAR POWER:

After the attacks of September 11th, the 9 -11 Commission report documented the fact that Mohammad Atta suggested striking the Indian Point nuclear power plant 24 miles from Manhattan, but that Bin Laden had rejected the idea for the time being.

Now, some six years later, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed a rule that would require some, but not all, new reactor designs to be reviewed to improve their ability to withstand an attack similar to the attacks of September 11th.

Would your administration allow new nuclear reactor designs, that have NOT been reviewed and improved for the post 9-11 reality, to be built and licensed in the U.S.?

I believe that we should not build any new nuclear plants until we solve the waste question. Nuclear energy can never be a primary answer to the problem of global warming. We'd have to double our nuclear capacity to solve one-seventh of the global warming problem. I believe we can meet our electricity needs with renewable energy-like wind and solar - and by developing the technology to capture and permanently store the carbon emitted by coal-fired power plants.

The U.S. still doesn't have an environmentally sound solution for the radioactive wastes produced by nuclear power plants. Senator Clinton has already stated that " the available scientific evidence makes clear: Yucca Mountain is not a safe place to store spent fuel from our nation's nuclear reactors." Additionally, the Senator has stated that her administration would not license the Yucca mountain dump.

Would your administration attempt to license Yucca Mountain as our nation's nuclear waste repository?

I am opposed to building a repository for nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain. Last year, the Secretary of Energy admitted that some government scientists working on the project may have falsified important documents. Other scientists have found that key aspects of the government's conclusions about the site are not technically supported. Moreover, thousands of shipments of nuclear waste from all over the country could be a target for terrorist attacks.

3) JAPANESE WHALING AND MARINE SANCTUARIES:

Our oceans are in a state of emergency. Ecological extinction caused by over-fishing is the greatest threat facing the oceans today, exacerbating stresses resulting from climate change, resource extraction, and pollution. Indiscriminate fishing methods kill an additional 27 million tons of marine life as bycatch each year, including billions of fish, 300,000 whales and dolphins and an even greater number of sea turtles. Less than one percent of U.S. waters are designated as marine sanctuaries, and most of these allow intensive fishing and other extractive industries.

Unfortunately, realization has yet to dawn for managers or policy makers that it is not possible to sustainably "harvest" fish stocks at current levels. Industrialized fleets using state of the art technology hunt down fish populations that are increasingly small and remote; there is literally nowhere left for fish to hide. In November 2006, the journal Science reported the results of an analysis by an international team of scientists who estimate that global fisheries could collapse by the middle of this century.

At the same time, Japan has escalated their illegal and unnecessary whaling operations. This year, their fleet will seek to kill some 1,000 whales, including 50 endangered fin whales and, for the first time in decades, 50 humpbacks. Opposition to whaling is very strong among Americans, and throughout most of the world. Yet diplomatic efforts to end whaling have been shamefully weak.

If you are elected president, what concrete steps will you take to convince Japan to stop whaling? Will you create new safe havens for marine life in our oceans, either as National Monuments or Marine Sanctuaries, and if so, where?

Illegal whale hunting imperils critical elements of our oceans' ecosystems – including endangered species. As president, I will work with responsible members of the international community to halt illegal whale hunting. I applaud Japan's decision to cancel its planned humpback whale hunt this year, and hope to build on this first step toward ending whale hunting.

One of our objectives for protecting marine life should be to develop sustainable fisheries. We must prevent fish stocks from depletion and rebuild fish populations that are endangered. We must assure the fishing industry of a sustainable harvest over time. We should develop and use better technology to get better and more accurate data on fish stocks. And when regulatory decisions bring about sudden economic harm, we should ensure that economic assistance is there to help those in need.

Our goal, however, should be to stop fish stocks from getting to the point where drastic measures are necessary. We have a responsibility to future generations to ensure that species do not go extinct due to overfishing and that resources available today are still abundant in future years. It is also important to make sure that any resolution of this issue be global in nature. One other tool to rebuild fish populations is to create more marine protected areas. Our goal should be to develop sustainable fisheries for the betterment of species and fishermen alike.

Greenpeace is requesting your response to these questions BEFORE the Iowa Caucuses.

Please email all responses by January 2, 2008 to: rick.hind@wdc.greenpeace.org

Thank you for your immediate attention to these critical issues.

Sincerely,

Rick Hind
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