

Superstorm Sandy: Powerful Case For Revisiting Fukushima and the Dangers of Nuclear Energy From Natural Disasters

By [Washington's Blog](#)

Theme: [Oil and Energy](#)

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Conditions at 3 US Reactors Were Similar to What Caused the Fukushima Disaster

We [barely dodged](#) a nuclear crisis from Hurricane Sandy at the [Oyster Creek, Nine Mile and Salem](#) plants.

For example, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission [confirmed](#) loss of power to the fuel pools at Oyster Creek:

On October 29, 2012, Oyster Creek declared a Notice of Unusual Event followed by an Alert due to high water levels in the intake structure. Elevated intake structure water levels are of concern as excessive levels can flood certain plant components and render normal cooling systems inoperable. No safety systems were adversely affected by the high intake level. The site also experienced a loss of offsite power. Both emergency diesel generators started as designed and supplied power to the emergency electrical busses. Shutdown cooling and spent fuel pool cooling were temporarily lost but subsequently restored, after the busses were reenergized. At 9:59 a.m. EDT on October 30, the licensee restored one line of off-site power via a start-up transformer. Oyster Creek terminated the Alert at 3:52 a.m. EDT on October 31 when water level dropped below 4.5 ft and off-site power was fully restored.

Time Magazine [notes](#):

Superstorm Sandy's unexpected wrath makes a powerful case for revisiting Fukushima and the dangers to nuclear energy from natural disasters. As Sandy made landfall on Atlantic City, Oyster Creek nuclear power plant nearby was fortunately on a [scheduled outage](#). But Indian Point 3 in Buchanan, N.Y., Nine Mile Point 1 in Scriba, N.Y., and Salem Unit 1 in Hancocks Bridge, N.J., [all experienced shutdowns](#) because of high water levels or electrical disruption. Last year, the dangerous Fukushima nuclear power plant meltdown was caused by similar conditions after tsunami waves flooded the plant and short-circuited both the regular and back-up electrical systems.

Equally dangerous are drought and record heat conditions the U.S. experienced last summer. In August, [one of two reactors](#) at the Millstone nuclear power plant near New London, Conn., not far from where I grew up, was shut down because water in Long Island Sound needed to cool the reactors got too warm. Cool water is necessary to produce electricity.

Fukushima has been a worldwide wakeup call, particularly for the United States, the country with the [largest number of reactors](#) — 104. The lesson is

glaringly obvious:when nature and nuclear energy collide the consequences can be lethal.

Indeed, the gravest natural threats are not being addressed. See [this](#) and [this](#).

Time continues:

Unfortunately, Japan is not offering an inspiring example of how to handle this threat. While all but two of the country's 50 reactors [remain offline](#), government and nuclear industry are proposing plant restarts and construction projects. This muddled move stands against the majority of Japanese citizens who have [turned against](#) nuclear power.

The American government is [largely responsible](#) for the Japanese government's stubborn support for nuclear power.

Time concludes:

It's time to face the facts: Mother Nature rules. The best we can do is try to lessen the damage from her wrath. Phasing out nuclear power is the safe answer.

Indeed ... nuclear power – other than perhaps [alternative types](#) – is [expensive and bad for the environment](#).

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