

# FUKUSHIMA PASSES CHERNOBYL AS WORST NUCLEAR DISASTER IN HISTORY AS IT POISONS CALIFORNIA'S COAST LINE

---

  POSTED BY WHITNEY WEBB

Jerry Brown and Realty Association forbid all news outlets from discussing the

Dangers!

 1 Star  2 Stars  3 Stars  4 Stars  5 Stars

THE CONTINUED COVER-UP OF THE FUKUSHIMA IMPACTS IN JAPAN IS LIKELY DUE TO THE WIDESPREAD CONTAMINATION OF SOIL, VEGETATION, AND WATER PROLIFIC ENOUGH THAT IT WOULD LEAD TO EVACUATIONS SO MASSIVE IN SCOPE THEY COULD COLLAPSE JAPAN'S ECONOMY, THE THIRD LARGEST IN THE WORLD.

**TOKYO** – According to peace and environmental justice watchdog [NukeWatch](#), the Fukushima disaster has overtaken Chernobyl as the worst nuclear disaster in human history. Writing in *CounterPunch*, John LaForge, co-director of NukeWatch, [noted](#)

**that** the meltdown at the Daiichi nuclear power plant in Japan in 2011 is now believed to have released between 5.6 and 8.1 times more atmospheric radiation than did Chernobyl, markedly surpassing the 1986 nuclear disaster. Despite the gravity of that revelation, the media has ignored the issue, suggesting that **the previous cover-up** of the disaster is still in effect.

The change in status is largely the result of the fact that the three melted reactors at the Fukushima plant have never been properly contained and their release of radioactivity into the environment has continued in the years since the meltdown first occurred.

For instance, **last February**, a hole measuring two meters in diameter was discovered within the metal grating at the bottom of the containment vessel built around the plant's No. 2 reactor, allowing the reactor's fuel to escape from the reactor and into the surrounding environment. The hole permitted radiation inside the reactor to **reach 530 sieverts per hour**, a massive increase from the 73 sieverts per hour that were recorded soon after the disaster. To put these figures in perspective, NASA's maximum amount of radiation exposure permitted for astronauts **over their entire lifetimes** is 1 sievert.

Aside from now surpassing Chernobyl in terms of radiation released into the atmosphere, Fukushima has also greatly surpassed Chernobyl in the release of Cesium-137, a radioactive isotope that **greatly increases** cancer risk and **dissolves readily** in the environment.

While reporting on the disaster initially focused on the estimate of Cesium-137 released into the environment during the explosion and subsequent meltdown, scientists at the Korean Atomic Energy Research Institute (KAER) have since multiplied those figures by the Cesium-137 inventory of the fuel contained within the three melted reactors, given that Fukushima's discharge of nuclear waste, particularly into the ocean, has **continued unabated** since the initial disaster struck in 2011.

The results of Fukushima's total Cesium-137 release is staggering. The oceanic release of Cesium-137, the worst ever recorded, resulted in the discharge of between 121.6 to 131.2 quadrillion Bq (**becquerel**), while the atmospheric release of Cesium-137 was between 30.4 and 32.8 quadrillion Bq. Combined, Fukushima's total release of Cesium-137 into the environment comes to between 152 and 164 quadrillion Bq. Chernobyl's total release of the same compound came to only between 70 and 110 quadrillion Bq, making Fukushima approximately two times worse than Chernobyl just in terms of the release of Cesium-137.

However, there has since been speculation that these startling figures are *low*, as the estimate of Cesium-137 in the melted Fukushima-Daiichi reactors that was used by KAER (760 – 820 quadrillion Bq) was significantly lower than the U.S. government's estimate of 1,300 quadrillion Bq).

## COVERING UP THE INVISIBLE

Even though Fukushima officially gaining the title of the world's worst nuclear disaster seems newsworthy, few outlets have covered the revelation nor have they assessed what Fukushima means for the environment and human health in the areas

impacted by the release of radiation. The reasons for this have been clear since the disaster first occurred: there was and continues to be a cover-up of the dangers of the Fukushima disaster and the effects of the disaster on human health and the environment.

Though accusations of a cover-up were initially dismissed as a “conspiracy theory,” in 2016 the Japanese government and TEPCO, the Japanese energy company that manages the Fukushima plant, **admitted** that they had been involved in a cover-up of the scandal. The admission was made after a series of reports revealed that TEPCO officials had been pressured by the Japanese government not to use the word “meltdown” when discussing the disaster. All evidence indicates that this cover-up still continues, as the disaster is largely absent from news coverage and coordinated efforts have been made to downplay its impact.

In the years since the disaster, study after study has confirmed the widespread contamination of the **soil, water** and **vegetation** in the area surrounding Fukushima. The contamination has also been detected well beyond Fukushima, affecting Japan in its entirety, including **Tokyo’s drinking water**.

*A worker uses a Geiger counter to check for possible radioactive contamination at a market in Seoul, South Korea. South Korea is appealing a World Trade Organization decision against import bans on Japanese fish imposed in the wake of Fukushima. (AP/Ahn Young-joon)*

In addition, childhood cases of thyroid cancer **have skyrocketed**. However, some scientists **continue to claim** that there is no correlation between the increased rate of cancer cases and Fukushima, asserting that increased early detection tests in the wake of the disaster were responsible for the uptick. Yet, now that Fukushima is known to have been a significantly worse nuclear disaster than Chernobyl, claims that there is no correlation hold less weight, given that the link between Chernobyl and thyroid

cancer cases in children living near that area is **well-known and widely recognized** by the international scientific community.

Consequences of the disaster have also been felt as far away as the United States. Soon after the disaster, radiation **was detected** in the drinking water of numerous U.S. cities and in the milk of American cattle. Since then, radiation from Fukushima was acknowledged to have reached U.S. shores by scientists. While reported radiation of the West Coast **was noted** to be low, media outlets used this to suggest that there was no reason for concern, even though it was known at the time that the levels of radiation would rise in the coming years. Despite that, the U.S. government **does not monitor** the spread of Fukushima radiation along the U.S. West Coast or around the Hawaiian Islands.

Despite the fact that Fukushima radiation is known to have contaminated a wide area – particularly in Japan – it is shocking that so little concern around the consequences for human health or the environment has developed. One likely factor in the lack of concern is that food, water and air contaminated with radioactive Cesium looks and tastes **no different** from their uncontaminated counterparts. Unlike cases where the flavor of food or the appearance of water drastically changes after an environmental disaster, Fukushima's contamination is largely invisible, making a cover-up much easier.

## YET ANOTHER SHORT-SIGHTED DECISION

Yet, given that it is worse than Chernobyl in scope, awareness of Fukushima's impact can only be delayed for so long, as even the smallest exposure to the radioactive isotopes released during the

disaster increases cancer risk. This ensures that the worst of the crisis will make itself known in the years to come.

As LaForge notes, the likely reason for the continued cover-up of the Fukushima impacts in Japan is that the widespread nature of the contamination of soil, vegetation and water would lead to evacuations so massive in scope that doing so would likely collapse Japan's **already fragile** economy, the **third largest economy** in the world. Given the interconnectedness of the international economy, the collapse of the Japanese economy that could occur by accurately acknowledging the scope of the disaster would have global consequences.

But is denying the impact of Fukushima better than saving a global economy that **may tank anyway**? The answer will surely make itself known in the generations to come.