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The Honourable John Baird, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A2

August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Dear Minister Baird,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the ongoing crisis of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. It was reported last week that the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) unintentionally dumped 11,500 tons of radioactive water into the Pacific Ocean. This action is not only an environmental disaster but a possible violation of international law and highlights the need for assistance from the international community.

The Fukushima plant operator TEPCO recently reported that highly radioactive water had leaked from a storage tank on site. The leak was eventually contained but its occurrence highlights the existence of a far greater problem, namely, the viability of containing the immense quantities of water required to cool the reactor cores stored on-site. The storage container in question was just one of over 1000 containers that have been built to contain the highly radioactive water from the site since the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami caused a meltdown of three reactors on 11 March 2011.

TEPCO has been dealing with the contaminated water situation on its own, however recent events and ongoing crises indicate that help is desperately needed to contain the ongoing dangers regarding the Fukushima Reactors. Now that the Government of Japan has announced it will take a lead role in managing the situation, essentially side-lining TEPCO, it would be a good time for Canada to offer any assistance. It must be of paramount importance to the international community to establish emergency measures and more fundamental steps to eliminate the roots of the contaminated water problems arising from nuclear reactors.

The 1972 Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, to which Japan is a signatory, bans the dumping of pollution at sea. The convention includes

a special provision for radioactive waste—if a suspected violation has occurred, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) can be asked to complete a technical evaluation and review, which is then considered by a compliance group. But the convention contains a loophole: it only covers the dumping of waste from vessels, aircraft and other man-made structures at sea. It does not cover land-based discharges, as is occurring at Fukushima. That falls under national jurisdiction. In addition, the 1986 Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, obligates nations to provide data such as the accident's time, location and radiation releases to affected states when harmful trans-boundary radiation is released. Violations of international treaties due to either the recent leak at the Fukushima reactors or the handling of the leak by TEPCO must be examined closely and any and all loopholes must be closed.

This dire situation raises many questions. What is the government doing to ensure these International treaties are respected? Is the Department of Foreign Affairs examining the possible violation of international treaties? Is the government going to offer assistance to Japan in resolving this and other urgent situations arising from the disaster at the Fukushima reactors?

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter.



Elizabeth May, O.C., M.P.  
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