SOURCE: Seawater Radiation Levels Drop Off Crippled Nuclear Plant
by Matt Smith, CNN

SUMMARY

Radioactive iodine concentrations in Japan's seawater from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant has begun to drop after nearly four weeks. Iodine-131 had been as high as 7.5 million times the legal standards and is now less than 4% of that amount or 280,000 times the legal amount. Levels of cesium-137 were also down, but remained 61,000 times the legal standard. These concentrations were the results of 8 metric tons of radioactive water being pumped into the ocean per hour from the No. 2 reactor's cracked turbine shaft damaged by the recent earth quake and subsequent tsunami that began off the coast of Japan on March 11. By using a silica-based polymer, workers managed to plug this leak on Wednesday. Even so, authorities are skeptical about this being the only leak that may develop.

To counteract the threat of an hydrogen explosion, authorities began pumping non-flammable nitrogen into the containment vessel around reactor No. 1 late Wednesday to avoid a hydrogen build-up that could result in blasts similar to those that have already occurred in reactor No. 1 and No. 3.

Since Monday, plant workers have been sending 10,000 tons of less-radioactive water into the ocean to make room for more dangerous super-charged coolant that amounts to 400,000 gallons a day. Near-by South Korea and the fishing industry are upset about this dumping of water waste and Japanese officials have acknowledged that they could have provided these entities more information. Japanese officials are considering offering some compensation to those depend on the ocean for their living.

Experts continue to claim that these releases pose little health risk to humans or sea life stating that the material is quickly dispersed and diluted.

SHORT SUMMARY

The amount of two radioactive elements, Iodine-131 and cesium-137, that have been gushing into the ocean around Japan's Fukushima Daliichi power plant have begun to drop after the No. 2 reactor began leaking into the sea four weeks ago. Experts used a special polymer to plug the leak. Since the earth quake and tsunami struck Japan on March 11, workers have tried to reduce this discharge and to prevent another hydrogen explosion in reactor 1 like those that occurred in 1 and 3 in the first few days after the tsunami.

The discharge has made businesses and countries that rely on the ocean concerned and somewhat upset by Japan's actions to date, and its authorities have admitted some mistakes in providing information to these parties and are considering the offer of some compensation.

Experts insist that the damage this leak has caused to humans and to sea life will remain small.

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ABSTRACT

Japanese authorities announce that the discharge of radioactive elements has decreased since they have plugged the leak in the Fukushima Daiichi power plant's reactor No. 2's turbine shaft. In addition, they are taking steps to avoid another hydrogen explosion like those that occurred in the first days after the tsunami by pumping non-flammable hydrogen into the containment vessel of reactor No. 1. Japanese official have apologized to neighboring South Korea and to the area's fishermen for the damage done to their environment and may provide compensation for those who experience financial loss. They insist that these events will pose little threat to area humans and sea life.

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