



Nuke Chief at Fort Calhoun, Critics Up Concerns

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While the man in charge of the country's nuclear power is in Nebraska today getting a firsthand look at flood waters that are threatening the **Fort Calhoun Nuclear Station** north of Omaha, [opponents of nuclear power](#) are stepping up their criticism of the plant's safety program.

As **Nebraska Watchdog** first reported **Gregory Jaczko**, the Chairman of the **Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)**, toured the **Cooper Nuclear Station** in Brownville, Nebraska on Sunday before heading north to see

the Fort Calhoun reactor today.

Despite the Missouri River's ever rising waters which are now less than three feet from forcing the Cooper plant to be shutdown, Jaczko downplayed any discussion of a radiation leak or flood waters climbing into the plant. Jaczko telling reporters, "Everything's possible but right now it is not anticipated that we would see the water levels get that high." Jaczko and officials with the **Nebraska Public Power District** which runs Cooper insist the plant is safe and would be shut down before any problems occur.



The reactor at Fort Calhoun has been shut down since April and plant officials have said they do not intend to bring it back on-line until the threat of flooding is over.

Early Sunday morning a 2,000 foot long, eight foot tall, water-filled rubber flood wall protecting the Fort Calhoun plant collapsed. According to the NRC although the plant remains safe the collapse "allowed floodwaters to surround the auxiliary and containment buildings." While the NRC also says that emergency generators powered the plant Sunday while workers tried to restore power, at least one anti-nuclear group finds that scenario troublesome. On its website **Beyond Nuclear** contends that if the back-up generators also fail "the final line of defense, in terms of running vital reactor cooling systems, would be the direct current (DC) emergency batteries. At most U.S. atomic reactors, such batteries only have 4 hours of life."

In the meantime the NRC says that Fort Calhoun is protected from floodwaters up to 1,014 feet. As of Sunday the Missouri was just above 1,006 feet and not expected to climb past 1,008 feet.

Reported by Joe Jordan, joe@nebraskawatchdog.org

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