

Fukushima Radiation Hitting West Coast of North America: “No One Is Measuring So Therefore We Should Be Alarmed”

Federal, State and Local Governments Refuse to Test for Radiation on the West Coast of North America

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Numerous models show that - while the ocean dilutes radiation - [pockets and streams of concentrated radiation may still hit the West Coast of North America](#).

West Coast residents are very concerned. Indeed, many local and state government officials have said that residents are inundating them with questions about Fukushima radiation.

And yet the government *isn't measuring* seawater or fish on the West Coast for radiation.

Ken Buessler is the [head scientist](#) at Woods Hole in Massachusetts, [one of the world's top](#) ocean science institutions. Much of Buessler's career has focused on measuring radioactive particles in the ocean, and he's been studying groundwater and ocean samples in and around Fukushima since the accident in March of 2011.

Buessler has consistently tried to downplay the risks from Fukushima, and yet even he admits that we won't know unless we test. Buessler [noted](#) this week:

The predictions are rather low and are not of direct concern, but **no one makes measurements of these isotopes along the [West] coast** .

No one is measuring so therefore we should be alarmed. I really try to take the approach that we shouldn't trivialize the risks of radiation and shouldn't be overly alarmed.

Buessler [said](#) last week:

What we **don't really know** is **how fast and how much is being transported** across the Pacific. **Yes, models tell us it will be safe, yes the levels we expect off the US West Coast and Canada we expect to be low, but we need measurements** — especially now, as the plume begins to arrive along the West Coast and **will actually increase in concentration** over the next 1 to 2 years. **Despite public concern about the levels, no public agency in the US is monitoring** the activities in the Pacific.

Without careful, extensive, consistent monitoring, we'll have no way of knowing how much radiation from Fukushima is reaching our shores, and how it could affect life in the ocean.

[And:](#)

Buesseler says **no US government agency currently tests radiation levels in the Pacific Ocean.** "I don't expect the radiation levels to be high but we can't dismiss the concerns that the public has."

"The effects of Fukushima will be increasing as the front edge of a large water plume coming from the nuclear plant will reach California soon and increase over the years," said Buesseler.

Buesseler recently took his concerns to Washington where he met with US government officials at the various agencies responsible for monitoring radiation levels in air, food, and water.

He said **he visited officials at the Department of Energy, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency.**

"They all said that it's not their responsibility to test the Pacific Ocean for radiation. This issue is falling between the cracks of government responsibility. It's a health and safety issue here," Buesseler said.

And Buesseler [points out](#) the circular reasoning which the government is using (at 10:00):

I completely agree that **no radiation has been seen in the regards that we're not really testing for it** [laughter] in any organized way ... We have very few data; it's not really being organized. **The government says we don't really need to do that because we're predicting very low levels.**

This type of circular reasoning is - unfortunately - common these days. For example, when bad policy led to the 2008 financial crisis, the Gulf Oil spill, factory-farming caused disease, runaway pesticide use, and other problems, the government simply [stopped testing or changed allowable levels](#).

U.C. Berkeley professor of nuclear engineering Eric Norman [raises](#) a similar point:

There is no systematic testing in the US of air, food, and water for radiation, continuous testing is needed"

"I'm not terribly confident in the information Japan is sharing about the plant's activities and clean up. That's why **it's even more important now to**

advocate for continuous testing of air, food, and ocean water for radiation."

University of Alaska Fairbanks researcher Doug Dasher [notes](#):

There's a lot of unknowns, a lot of uncertainties. There are others that also have the same message that they want to get out, **we really need to sample to understand this** and we really need to look at what's happening out there in the ecosystem at the same time. There's an opportunity to do this. It's a huge amount of initial release, and **the models do not address the continuing release** [the models all assume that Fukushima was totally contained by about June 2011 ... in fact, it has [leaked continuously hundreds of tons of radioactive water every day for more than 2/12 years](#)]. Fukushima has continued to leak

You do have ships and programs going on that may be **sampling marine waters for everything else but radionuclides**, so you're not necessarily directing that a ship has to go out solely at cost to sample for radionuclides.

No concrete information to even delve into making a real judgment on any type of risk to the ecosystem.

The information's not out there.

(Dasher's statement is even more dramatic given that he and other University of Alaska scientists think that Fukushima radiation [might have caused Alaska's seals to become sick](#).)

Cal. State Long Beach biology professor Steven Manley [says](#):

People should know the amount of radioactive material in the kelp.

I think the amount will be small, but small doesn't mean insignificant

It is imperative that we monitor this coastal forest for any radioactive contaminants that will be arriving this year in the ocean currents from Fukushima.

Steven Starr - Director of the Clinical Laboratory Science Program at the University of Missouri - [says](#):

I read a very good study that was done at a big center in Australia and Spain. They predict that every cubic meter of water off the West Coast is going to

have something like 10 to 20 atomic disintegrations per second from cesium in it over the next several years. That doesn't sound like a lot I guess, but **what we've also seen is that the stuff comes across the Pacific, some of it's concentrated. It's in pockets of it, the fish swim through that and they feed in it. It's kind of a random process.****

It's kind of a crap-shoot really.

Some West Coast cities – such as [Fairfax](#) and [Berkeley](#), California – have passed resolutions pleading for the federal and state governments to conduct tests. But the feds and state governments are so far silent.

As nuclear expert Arnie Gundersen has been saying since the Fukushima accident occurred, we must [demand that our elected representatives require testing](#).

Postscript: Dr. Buessler at Woods Hole will conduct some sampling of West Coast seawater for radiation. Dr. Buessler will use [crowdsourcing and crowdfunding](#) to pay for his testing. Please support his efforts.

And Dr. Manley will test [some West Coast kelp](#) for radiation.

But these are small-scale, isolated efforts.

[Safecast](#), [Netc](#), [Radiation Network](#) and others have set up national geiger counter networks. And Infowars has heroically sent a reporter [up and down the West coast](#) using a hand-held geiger counter to test for radiation. But these all test for radiation on the land, and do not test the seawater or fish themselves.

So we need to demand that the government test seawater and fish, and publicly report the results.

Many government officials have, unfortunately, [fallen for voodoo science](#) promoted by the nuclear industry that you get more radiation from eating bananas or from background radiation. In the real world, however, Fukushima radiation is [not comparable to bananas](#), and there was [no background radiation](#) in elements spewed by Fukushima – such as radioactive cesium or iodine – until nuclear bombs and nuclear accidents through them into the environment a few decades ago.

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