

**From:** [Sonya Siefering](#)  
**To:** [Brown, Don](#)  
**Cc:** [fpettis@cleanpowerlakecounty.org](mailto:fpettis@cleanpowerlakecounty.org)  
**Subject:** [External] Public Comment: AS 2021-03: Adjusted Standard for the Waukegan Station  
**Date:** Friday, March 29, 2024 11:29:17 AM

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Mr Brown,

I've lived in Waukegan for 25 years, and for the last 15 years, I've lived a little over a mile from the NRG/Waukegan Generation Station, which is pretty much in my "front yard". So obviously, I have my own family's health and safety in mind as I write these comments, but my thoughts have to live inside a larger worldview.

According to NOAA, The Great Lakes span 4,530 miles of coast and account for 21 percent of the world's freshwater. More than 30 million people—10 percent of the U.S. population and 30 percent of the Canadian population—rely on the Great Lakes for drinking water. It's almost paradoxical that we need clean, fresh water to safely survive yet companies and corporations like NRG have been allowed for decades to contaminate that water.

In this larger worldview, the dry parts of the world are becoming drier, droughts are becoming more severe, protective land/sea ice is disappearing, temperatures are rising, and we've removed so much groundwater from planet Earth that land is sinking, and we've changed Earth's spin. Regionally, we've pumped so much groundwater that wells are no longer safe to drink from and large inland communities like Waukesha and Lake Zurich have had to pipe to Lake Michigan.

Perhaps there was an "industrial time" when humans might not have known the repercussions of ingesting hazardous substances, but thankfully, science has shown (and continues to show) how dangerous so many chemicals are to not just humans but to the natural environment at large. Our world and Waukegan have clearly moved past that stage of the "unknown," and the cleanups must continue.

NRG pays hundreds of millions of dollars just to have their name on a stadium in Houston, so a few million dollars worth of fines to avoid cleaning old ash ponds in Waukegan is obviously something they can easily brush off. NRG will set Climate Action Targets they will never meet, and communities like Waukegan will continue to suffer the consequences unless the punishments become more severely expensive.

In the larger worldview, the United States and Canada need to create strict legislation about "industrial" areas that drain into the precious Great Lakes so that companies like NRG can't continue the cleanup charade or create new, ongoing water safety disasters. We're only going to depend more heavily on this 20% of the world's freshwater supply.

Sincerely,  
Sonya Siefering  
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