



## Radiation and Public Health Project

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### **DEATH RATES FROM CANCER AND OTHER CAUSES SOAR AFTER NUCLEAR POWER PLANT STARTUP IN SALEM COUNTY NJ – NEW STUDY**

Philadelphia, April 16, 2019 – Since the mid-1980s, the Salem County death rate from cancer rose from 5.4% below to 32.6% above the rate in other New Jersey and is now the county with the highest rate in the state, according to a new journal article issued today.

“This highly significant trend is an epidemic that must be addressed by public health officials,” says Joseph Mangano, an epidemiologist and lead author of the study. “The fact that the increase occurred soon after the startup of the Salem/Hope Creek nuclear plant suggests that exposures from the plant may be a contributing factor,” he adds. The article was published this month in the *Journal of Environmental Protection*.

From the late 1960s to the mid-1980s, Salem’s cancer death rate ranged from 0.1% to 5.4% less than the state, before the sharp increases began. The three reactors at the nuclear plant opened in 1976, 1980, and 1986. Salem’s rate is now elevated for all genders, races, ages, and ethnic groups. In addition, the county death rate for all causes combined jumped from 0.6% above to 28.4% above the state since the mid-1980s.

The article showed that if Salem’s death rate had stayed 5.4% below the state after 1986, 1018 fewer cancer deaths would have occurred. If the county rate had remained 0.6% above the state after 1986, 3493 fewer county residents would have died from all causes.

Concern about radiation health hazards comes less than a year after the state legislature approved, and Governor Phil Murphy signed, a law allowing electric utilities that do not release greenhouse gas to raise rates \$300 million a year. At its April 18 meeting, the state Board of Public Utilities is expected to announce Exelon, which runs Salem/Hope Creek, as a recipient. In states with similar laws, nuclear plants receive most added revenues.

“Nuclear reactors are not ‘emission-free’ as supporters claim, and shouldn’t be given any handouts, since the multi-step process of making uranium for reactors uses huge amounts of greenhouse gas,” says Steven Fenichel MD of Physicians for Social Responsibility. “Nuclear plants emit other types of harmful toxins, and thus state support should be given to truly safe and renewable sources, such as solar and wind power,” adds Rev. Robert Moore, who directs Coalition for Peace Action.

The research will be announced Tuesday, April 16, in Philadelphia’s City Hall at the Mayor’s Reception Room (Room 202), from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. The article can be found at <https://www.scirp.org/Journal/PaperInformation.aspx?PaperID=91648>.

