OMNI NEWSLETTER #1 ON NUCLEAR POWER

BUILDING A CULTURE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
For our children’s children and grandchildren
December 17, 2007, Compiled by Dick Bennett

WE, THE PEOPLE. These materials are offered to assist you in becoming your own autonomous center of power, that can be enlarged in association with OMNI and other environmental organizations. OMNI’s Carbon Caps Task Force voted nuclear power as its last choice, with efficiency and wind/solar as its first. www.omnicenter.org Gladys Tiffany and Melanie Dietzel, co-presidents

SENATOR LINCOLN (202) 224-4843 Fax: (202) 228-1371.
Fayetteville office: 251-1380
Senator Mark Pryor: Phone: (202) 224-2353 Fax: (202) 228-0908
CONGRESSMAN Boozman: Lowell office: 479-725-0400.

ENERGY VOTE IN CONGRESS, CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES
Greetings: There are two energy bills. One was voted on last week and the other is to be voted on. Calls are needed for the pending bill. Please see immediately below. NUKES were stopped once but need to be stopped again.
From: Nukefree.org
Sent: Friday, December 14, 2007 5:11 PM
Subject: Vote Imminent, please call/fax Congress this weekend and Monday!

Fellow Green Energy Advocates:

We have won a great victory, but now face a critical last-ditch fight.

Thanks in part to your efforts, the Congressional leadership has removed proposed loan guarantees from the Energy Bill. Spearheaded by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, we took a great step forward for a green-powered future.

But now $25 billion in loan guarantees for new reactors, plus $2 billion for uranium enrichment, have been introduced into the Omnibus Appropriations Bill. It will take all our renewed energies to get them removed, as we did from the Energy Bill.

Nukefree.org is committed to this effort, and we are calling on you to continue your support for a safe-energy future. Please take a moment to call your Senators and Representatives, and to also call the offices of Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, House Minority Leader John Boehner, Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Robert Byrd, House Appropriations Committee Chair David Obey, as well as Majority Leader Reid and Speaker Pelosi and tell them to remove the $25 billion in nuclear loan guarantees from the Omnibus Appropriations Bill.

To contact Senators, phone the Senate switchboard and they will connect you: (202) 224-3121.
To contact Representatives, contact the House switchboard at
Sunday, April 13, 2008

(202) 225-3121.

The final vote may not come until Tuesday. Here's the basic message:

Dear Representative/Senator _________,

I'm writing to urge you to remove the $25 billion in nuclear loan guarantees from the Omnibus Appropriations Bill currently under consideration.

Nuclear reactors have 50 years of proven failure behind them, and we see no reason to build more. They are expensive, dangerous and environmentally destructive. They cannot get their own private liability insurance, cannot solve their nuclear waste problem, and cannot attract private investment without federal guarantees. They offer no solution to the climate crisis, and have been surpassed in every way by the revolution in renewables and efficiency.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Name
City, State

* * * * * * * * *

LEADERSHIP PHONE AND FAX NUMBERS:

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) Phone (202) 224-2541 Fax (202) 224-2499

House Minority Leader John Boehner (R-OH/8th) Phone (202) 225-6205 Fax (202) 225-5117

Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Robert Byrd (D-WV) Phone (202) 224-3954 Fax (202) 228-0002

House Appropriations Committee Chair David Obey (D-WI/7th) Phone (202) 225-3365 Fax (202) 225-3240

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) Phone (202) 224-3542 Fax (202) 224-7327

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA/8th)
Phone (202) 225-4965
Fax (202) 225-4188

For further background, please see the article "Will Congress Plunge Us (Again) into the Nuke Power Abyss?" written by our site's editor, Harvey Wasserman: http://nukefree.org/node/124

Please help us complete a victory that must be won.

Thank you,

NukeFree.org

If you want further info go to Nuclear Information and Resource Service
nirsnet@nirs.org; www.nirs.org or check out this article:

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/14/washington/14energy.html?_r=2&adxnnl=1&oref&slogin:

Thursday, December 13, 2007 5:23 PM

We (NIRS) are hearing that Senate-House appropriators are near agreement on a loan guarantee package that looks like this:

$25 billion for nukes

$10 billion for renewables
$10 billion for coal to liquids
$2 billion for uranium enrichment
$2 billion for coal to gas

While the $10 billion for renewables might be welcome, the package as a whole reflects misplaced priorities and a lost opportunity to address the climate crisis. Indeed, such an energy policy would make things far worse and make it much harder to reduce carbon emissions.

Throwing taxpayer money at wealthy utilities is not the way toward a sane, sustainable energy future.

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OPPOSITION TO NUCLEAR POWER

Nuclear Information and Resource Service
27 years of expertise on the nuclear fuel chain.
Contact: Linda Gunter, director of media relations
202.328.0002
lindag@nirs.org

Note to reporters: President Bush is expected to address – and advocate for – nuclear power in his State of the Union speech tonight. Although he may make only passing reference to his plans to revive the reprocessing of commercial waste fuel, this program is central to the Bush administration’s efforts to jump-start the moribund nuclear power industry. We offer the following statement for citation and quotation on this issue. We also include beneath the statement a short backgrounder on reprocessing. Our spokespeople are available for further comment by calling: 202.328.0002

Statement of Mary Olson, NIRS Campaign to Stop Reprocessing. Director of NIRS southeast office.

January 31, 2006. “President Bush’s misguided obsession with nuclear power has reached a critical and dangerous juncture. The administration has been desperate to find a nuclear waste solution in order to resuscitate the moribund and unpopular nuclear power industry by moving forward quickly on the scientifically-flawed Yucca Mountain waste dump in Nevada. Instead it has found itself spinning its wheels in the mire of Yucca Mountain’s geologic instability and the scandal of covering up these data. Faced with an industry impatient to move its on-site waste, the administration is now clutching at a new nuclear straw.

“Its latest scheme is reprocessing of irradiated commercial fuel, one of the dirtiest and most proliferation-vulnerable processes in the nuclear fuel chain. Abandoned in this country for more than 30 years, countries where it has been done – including Britain, France and Russia – are now reaping its hideous environmental legacy of contamination and disease.
“The price tag in dollars – as well as in health impacts – will be enormous if this country is allowed to venture back down the reprocessing road. The only U.S. commercial reprocessing site ever to operate - in West Valley, New York – is projected to cost more than $5 billion to clean up despite reprocessing only a fraction of the waste sent there between 1966 and 1972. Now Congress has awarded the U.S. Department of Energy $50 million of our money to set this debacle in motion once again although the totals are likely to reach the hundreds of billions of dollars.

“The existing nuclear reactors around the globe are already sitting-duck terrorist targets. Separating plutonium from nuclear power waste fuel – as reprocessing does – simply sets up new and inviting opportunities for terrorists to seize fissile, bomb-capable materials. Support for a reprocessing program makes a mockery of statements coming out of this administration that protecting the American people from terrorism is paramount. Instead, it will put more Americans in harm’s way.”

NUCLEAR POWER
Sign on!
A simple statement on nuclear power and the climate crisis

Dear Friends:

We’re getting a little tired hearing nuclear industry lobbyists and pro-nuclear politicians allege that environmentalists are now supporting nuclear power as a means of addressing the climate crisis. We know that’s not true, and we’re sure you do too. In fact, using nuclear power would be counterproductive at reducing carbon emissions. As Amory Lovins of Rocky Mountain Institute points out, “every dollar invested in nuclear expansion will worsen climate change by buying less solution per dollar...”

The statement below is simple and straightforward. We’ll send it to the media and politicians when they misstate the facts, and you can use it as well. We hope you and your organization will join us and sign on in support here. The more organizations and people sign on, the faster the media and politicians will get the message. Invite your friends and other organizations to sign too!

"We do not support construction of new nuclear reactors as a means of addressing the climate crisis. Available renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies are faster, cheaper, safer and cleaner strategies for reducing greenhouse emissions than nuclear power."

Please go to http://www.nirs.org/petition2/index.php to sign this statement. Organizational sign-ons are especially wanted, but individuals are encouraged to sign as well.

Michael Mariotte  
Executive Director  
Nuclear Information and Resource Service  
nirsnet@nirs.org

SENATOR LINCOLN  (202) 224-4843 Fax: (202) 228-1371.  
Fayetteville office:  251-1380
Reprocessing Is Not the “Solution” to the Nuclear Waste Problem

The Radioactive Waste Burden
Splitting atoms to make electricity has created an enormous problem: waste containing 95% of the toxic radioactivity produced during the Atomic Age. Nuclear weapons production, industrial activity, research and medicine combined, create only 5% of this problem.

Every nuclear power reactor annually generates 20-30 tons of high-level nuclear waste since the irradiated fuel itself is the waste when removed from the reactor core. Like fuel, the waste is a solid ceramic pellet, stacked inside a thin metal tube or ‘cladding.’ In addition to residual uranium, the waste is about 1% plutonium that is formed inside the fuel rods by the reactor. The waste also contains about 5% highly radioactive fission products like cesium, strontium and iodine, making it millions of times more radioactive than “fresh” uranium fuel. Unshielded, it delivers a lethal dose in seconds and will remain a hazard for at least 12,000 human generations.

No End in Site
High-level waste is piling up at reactor sites, stored outside of containment in pools, and in large dry containers called casks. A growing security threat, storage has been repeatedly approved to enable continued reactor operation, and therefore continued nuclear waste production, making risks greater. Now new reactors are being proposed, even though there is no credible solution for the approximately 120,000 tons of waste the first generation of reactors will produce.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has devoted nearly 20 years to the development of a high-level dump at Yucca Mountain, a geologically unstable, sacred site of the Western Shoshone people in Nevada. The State of Nevada and the Shoshone Nation have vigorously opposed this dump. Growing evidence substantiates that the Yucca site will fail in the fundamental goal of a repository: to isolate radioactivity from our environment. A second, industry-owned, alternative for centralizing the waste on an Indian Reservation in Utah let by a consortium called Private Fuel Storage (PFS) meeting enduring opposition from that state. Both Yucca and PFS would trigger a “Mobile Chernobyl”—the largest nuclear waste shipping campaign in history—with so many transport miles that accidents are inevitable and security is an oxymoron.

Disregarding Hard-Won Wisdom
The Bush / Cheney administration and its congressional allies are intent on reversing over 30 years of extraordinarily rare common sense in nuclear policy. In the 1970s it was decided that irradiated fuel and the plutonium it contains, should be treated as waste—not as a resource. This was in part due to the catastrophic failure after only one year of operations at West Valley, New York—the only commercial reprocessing site to operate in the U.S. West Valley’s reprocessing mess is still not cleaned up—and the projected cost is over $5 billion.

Every reprocessing site (France, UK, Russia, and soon Japan have the largest sites) is an environmental catastrophe, with massive releases of radioactivity to air, land and water; high worker radiation exposures; and residues that are harder to handle than the terrible waste it begins with. Reprocessing creates stockpiles of nuclear weapons-usable plutonium, and is unviable without large taxpayer subsidies. President Carter banned reprocessing as a nuclear non-proliferation measure; while Reagan lifted the ban, no commercial interest has pursued this expensive boondoggle, since it is not a profitable enterprise. Our current president apparently intends for taxpayers to pay for the relapse to reprocessing.

At the end of 2005, Congress awarded $50 million to the U.S. Department of Energy with instructions to make a new waste-reprocessing plan. DOE is directed to use one of its sites—in 2006 it instructed to hold a “competition” and the “winner,” to be announced in 2007, will get the new reprocessing site. Congress specified (another promise?) that the site should be opened by 2010.
Reprocessing Destabilizes Waste --
The fuel rods are taken out of the assemblies, chopped up and then dissolved in nitric acid. The resulting highly radioactive and caustic stew is then processed to remove the plutonium and the uranium, leaving the highly radioactive fission products in the liquid. While there are methods to attempt to re-stabilize this material, there has been a fundamental loss in the stability of the dry ceramic pellet in the metal clad fuel rod.

Completely False Claims
1. **Reprocessing is NOT recycling.** The formation of fission products in the fuel rods makes high-level waste fundamentally different from the uranium it came from. It is not possible to remake the original fuel again from high-level waste – thus it is not a cycle.

2. **Reprocessing does not reduce radioactivity.** No credible expert says reprocessing reduces total radioactivity; some less informed sources imply this. Reprocessing does change not the amount of radioactivity – except to smear it around a large surface area, thereby diluting it without any actual reduction of radioactivity.

3. **Reprocessing does not reduce waste volume;** to the contrary, fuel pellet volume is magnified by a factor of 100–100,000. The resulting “dilution” allows the reclassification from “high-level,” to the so-called “low-level” waste category, which is still deadly.

The “Midas-Touch” in Reverse
The King Midas story of childhood teaches about the hazard of greed. Radioactive waste contaminates everything it comes in contact with--but instead of turning it all to gold, everything it comes in contact with is turned to expensive, dangerous radioactive waste!

Kicking the Can…
A stated goal of reprocessing is to use plutonium for reactor fuel. The most common form is MOX (short for ‘mixed oxide”), made from plutonium and uranium 238 (depleted uranium). While today’s reactors can use MOX fuel, it is both **riskier and more hazardous:** MOX is harder to control, and twice as deadly as uranium fuel if control is lost. MOX does not “solve” the waste problem since reprocessing MOX fuel is even harder than reprocessing uranium fuel, and not widely done. Princeton’s Dr. Frank Von Hippel likens MOX use to “kicking the can down the road”–not dealing with the waste problem at all.

Plutonium Destabilizes Our World
High-level nuclear waste contains so much lethal radioactivity that the plutonium inside the waste fuel rods is effectively safeguarded. Separating out the plutonium makes it available for weapons use. For the United States to reverse more than 30 years of policy against recovering civil plutonium also reverses the moral authority with which the U.S. calls on other nations to refrain from this activity. North Korea and Iran are the most recent examples of countries ready to join the “nuclear weapons club.” Reprocessing is a direct contradiction to US reprimands of these nations for nuclear proliferation. The clear intention of the Bush / Cheney team to return to full-scale production of new nuclear weapons adds to this atomic hypocrisy.

Far from putting the atomic genie back in the bottle, reprocessing creates millions of gallons of highly radioactive, caustic, destabilized high-level waste that history shows will leak; be evaporated; residues put into glass that may, or may not retain the radioactivity for even a generation; and now, under a new policy, be left forevermore on the reprocessing site, mixed only with grout in a thin effort to keep it from contaminating soil, water, food and our bodies. This is **NO SOLUTION.**
--Mary Olson, January 2006
STATEMENT OF NIRS ON SOUTH TEXAS REACTOR APPLICATION
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Michael Mariotte, Executive Director
September 25, 2007 301-270-6477; 301-395-7463 (cell)

NEW REACTORS IN SOUTH TEXAS WOULD SET U.S. ENERGY POLICY ON
MISGUIDED COURSE

Today, NRG Energy said it is submitting an application to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to build
two new reactors at its South Texas nuclear site. This is the first full application for a new reactor in the
U.S. in more than 30 years.

This project is emblematic of the failures of U.S. energy policy to effectively meet the needs of our nation.
Nuclear power is a 20\textsuperscript{th} century technology in a new world of climate crisis and a future that demands a
distributed, sustainable approach to energy. Nuclear power requires massive taxpayer subsidies and yet still
cannot compete environmentally with the sustainable energy technologies that will power our future.

NRG Energy already has been quoted in the media (\textit{Washington Post}, September 25, 2007) as saying that
“the whole reason” the company is considering new nuclear reactors is taxpayer subsidies provided by
include taxpayer loan guarantees for new reactors, tax credits for the first six reactors built, the
Price-Anderson Act limitation of utility liability for nuclear accidents, and “risk insurance” to cover
possible delays in the licensing process.

Without taxpayer support, no utility would build a new atomic reactor, and no financial institution would
invest in a new reactor.

Moreover, the NRG Energy application would repeat one of the fundamental mistakes of the first
generation of nuclear power: the construction of nuclear reactors without a feasible facility or plan for
storage of the lethal radioactive waste the reactor would produce. The Yucca Mountain, Nevada,
radioactive waste dump is on its last legs, and appears increasingly unlikely to ever open. Even if it did, a
new round of nuclear construction would necessitate construction of another radioactive waste dump as
well—something no state in the country likely would accept. After 50 years, one would think the lesson
would have been learned: building atomic reactors without a scientifically-sound waste plan is folly.

Texas is blessed with enormous potential for wind and solar power, while aggressive energy efficiency
programs remain the cheapest, fastest and cleanest method of addressing both electricity demand and the
need to quickly reduce carbon emissions. Construction of new reactors in Texas would divert the resources
needed to implement those efficiency programs and help solar and wind reach their full potential—to the
detriment of Texans and all Americans. A recent study from American Council for an Energy-Efficient
Economy (summarized at http://www.nirs.org/alternatives/sestudy10.pdf) shows that Texas can meet all forecasted energy demand through energy efficiency and sustainable energy technologies.

Both Texas and the United States deserve better than a greedy utility feasting at the taxpayer trough to build another large polluting power plant. We expect Texans to oppose the NRG Energy project, and we expect to help Texans with their opposition.

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