

Environmental Statement on Nuclear Energy and Global Warming

June 2005

As national and local environmental, consumer, and safe energy organizations, we have serious and substantive concerns about nuclear energy. While we are committed to tackling the challenge of global warming, we flatly reject the argument that increased investment in nuclear capacity is an acceptable or necessary solution. Instead we can significantly reduce global warming pollution and save consumers money by increasing energy efficiency and shifting to clean, renewable sources of energy.

For at least 30 years, the public, policymakers, and private investors have viewed nuclear power as uneconomical, unsafe, and unnecessary. As a result, no new reactors have been ordered in this country. With respect to these serious concerns, nothing has changed. While we urgently need to reduce our global warming emissions, nuclear power still remains the least attractive, least economic, and least safe avenue to pursue.

Nuclear Power Is Unnecessary

We can meet our future electricity needs and reduce global warming pollution without increasing our reliance on nuclear energy. For example, a 2004 study by Synapse Energy Economics found that the U.S. could reduce carbon dioxide emissions from electricity generation by more than 47 percent by 2025 compared to business as usual and meet projected electricity demand, while saving consumers \$36 billion annually. In fact, we can do this while cutting our reliance on nuclear power by nearly half.

The states are moving forward with clean energy solutions. Nineteen states have passed renewable electricity standards requiring an increasing percentage of energy to be generated by renewable energy sources. Replicating this effort nationally would increase our ability to reduce global warming emissions, while benefiting public health, consumers and the environment. Several states are working to increase efficiency standards for appliances, while many are working to reduce global warming pollution from cars. The states are demonstrating that there is an effective arsenal of clean energy solutions that can significantly curb our global warming emissions; it is these ideas that we need to draw upon.

Nuclear Power Is Too Expensive

The economics of nuclear power remain so unattractive that without additional federal subsidies, no new plants will be built. Despite 50 years and more than \$150 billion in federal support, the nuclear power industry is still seemingly incapable of building a new plant on its own. In fact, the U.S. DOE's Energy Information Administration stated in its 2005 Annual Energy Outlook that "new [nuclear] plants are not expected to be economical."

Dominion CEO & Chairman Thomas Capps has stated that:

“If you announced you were going to build a new nuclear plant, Moody’s and Standard & Poor’s would assuredly drop your bonds to junk status, hedge funds would be bumping into each other trying to short your stock.”

Not surprisingly, private investors have shown such disinterest in supporting new nuclear power plants that the industry is, yet again, at the mercy of federal handouts. In 2003, Senator Domenici included extensive federal incentives in his original energy bill, including loan guarantees and power purchase agreements covering up to half the cost of building a new plant, as well as clean air credits and federal lines of credit. Despite this, Standard & Poor’s concluded:

“Standard & Poor’s Ratings Services has found that an electric utility with a nuclear exposure has weaker credit than one without and can expect to pay more on the margin for credit. Federal support of construction costs will do little to change that reality. Therefore, were a utility to embark on a new or expanded nuclear endeavor, Standard & Poor’s would likely revisit its rating on the utility.”

Due to the lack of private investment, it is the inevitable that any new nuclear construction will result in significant public cost to taxpayers. Between 1950 and 1998, the federal government spent 56 percent of the energy supply research and development on nuclear energy, while only 11 percent was invested in all renewable technologies. If the federal government is going to spend any money on energy, those dollars should be focused on clean and safe technologies.

Nuclear Energy Is Too Dangerous

Nuclear energy has never been safe, but post 9-11 nuclear power plants and radioactive waste storage facilities have become terrorist targets as well. Al-Qaeda operatives were surveying nuclear power plants as potential terrorist targets; in the post 9-11 world these risks are only elevated. The National Academy of Sciences has raised serious concerns about the safety of irradiated nuclear fuel storage facilities from terrorist attacks in its report entitled “Safety and Security of Spent Nuclear Fuel Storage.” Furthermore, protecting the fuel from terrorists as it is moved to longer term storage facilities, if they are ever built, will be nearly impossible.

The fact that reactors in the U.S. are also deteriorating with age and inadequate oversight by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission provides further reason for concern. Just three years ago, for example, a nuclear reactor in Ohio came within one-fifth of an inch of stainless steel from a rupture that would have vented radioactive steam into the reactor’s containment building and could have led to a meltdown.

Nuclear Power Is Too Polluting

Beyond operating concerns remains the unsolved and disturbing issue of waste disposal. Some 95 percent of the radioactivity ever generated in the U.S. is contained in the

nation's civilian high-level atomic waste. Despite almost two decades of pushing to make Yucca Mountain in Nevada the nation's high-level waste repository, it has not been shown scientifically to be suitable to safely store the waste. The Yucca Mountain project is further thrown into doubt by the recent revelations of the falsification of scientific data by USGS scientists, as well as the court ruling that found EPA's public health standards for the site to be illegal. No country in the world has solved its nuclear waste problem. It makes little sense to begin building new reactors when we don't know what to do with the lethal waste from the ones we have.

Using Nuclear Power to Address Global Warming Would Exacerbate the Problems

Major studies, such as those by MIT, agree that using nuclear power to have any significant effect on global warming would require building at least 1,000 new reactors worldwide. This would exacerbate all of the problems of the technology: more terrorist targets, more cost (potentially trillions of dollars), less safety, need for a new Yucca Mountain-sized waste site every four or five years, more proliferation of nuclear materials and technologies, dozens of new uranium enrichment plants, and, even then, a severe shortage of uranium even within this century, while displacing the resources needed to ensure a real solution to the global warming issue.

Conclusion

We believe that the financial and safety risks associated with nuclear power are so grave that nuclear power should not be a part of any solution to address global warming. There is no need to jeopardize our health, safety, and economy with increased nuclear power when we have cleaner, cheaper solutions to reduce global warming pollution.

Signatories (274):

National Groups

Center for Health, Environment, and Justice
Clean Water Action
Environmental Working Group
Friends of the Earth
Global Resource Action Center for the Environment (GRACE)
Greenpeace
Indigenous Environmental Network
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
Nuclear Information and Resource Service
Nuclear Policy Research Institute
Progressive Democrats of America
Public Citizen
Sierra Club
Sustainable Energy and Economy Network
U.S. Public Interest Research Group (U.S. PIRG)

Regional Groups

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League
New England Coalition
Northwest Energy Coalition
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy

State Groups

Alabama

Alabama Environmental Council

Alaska

Alaska PIRG

Arizona

Arizona PIRG
Arizona Safe Energy Coalition
Pray for Peace Foundation
The Nuclear Resister
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

California

Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility
Bay Area Hunters Point Community Advocates
Bay Area Nuclear Waste Coalition
Better World Group
Blue Water Network - A Division of Friends of the Earth
California Communities Against Toxics
California Environmental Rights Alliance
Clean Water Action (CA Chapter)
Committee to Bridge the Gap
Earth Action Network
Environment California
Global Community Monitor
Grandmothers for Peace
HOME: Healing Ourselves & Mother Earth
Lightupthedarkness.org
Occidental Arts and Ecology Center
Peace & Justice Network of San Joaquin County
Planning and Conservation League
Public Citizen – California
Redwood Alliance
Richard Norgaard, Professor of Energy and Resources, University of California at Berkeley
San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace
SLO GREEN Party Committee on Nuclear Waste
The Atomic Mirror
The Law Office of Maria E. Hall
Tri-Valley Communities Against A Radioactive Environment

Colorado

Center for Resource Conservation

Colorado Environmental Coalition
Colorado Renewable Energy Society
Colorado Solar Energy Industries Association
Environment Colorado
ProgressNow.org
Western Colorado Congress

Connecticut

Center for Resource Solutions
Citizens Awareness Network (CT Chapter)
Clean Water Action (CT Chapter)
Connecticut Coalition Against Millstone
ConnPIRG
Energy Solutions

Delaware

Green Delaware

Florida

Clean Water Action (FL Chapter)
Florida PIRG
Legal Environmental Assistance Foundation
Pegasus Foundation

Georgia

Action for a Clean Environment
Center for a Sustainable Coast
Food Not Bombs
GANE - Georgians Against Nuclear Energy
Savannah Riverkeeper
Sierra Club (GA Chapter)
Women's Voices for New Directions

Hawaii

Ahahui Malama i ka Lokahi (Hawaiians for the Conservation of Native Ecosystems)

Idaho

Snake River Alliance

Illinois

Cancer Prevention Coalition
Illinois PIRG
Inside Out Art Studio
New Community Project
No New Nukes
Nuclear Energy Information Service

Indiana

Citizens Action Coalition
INPIRG

Valley Watch, Inc.

Iowa

Iowa PIRG

Kansas

Enviro-Health Concerns

Kentucky

Kentucky Environmental Foundation

Louisiana

Advocates for Environmental Human Rights

Alliance for Affordable Energy

Louisiana Environmental Action Network

Maine

American Lung Association of Maine

Environment Maine

Friends of the Coast

Maine Public Health Association

Natural Resources Council of Maine

Maryland

Audobon Naturalist Society

Chesapeake Climate Action Network

Clean Water Action (Chesapeake Chapter)

Cleanup Coalition

Maryland United for Peace and Justice

MaryPIRG

Peace & Justice Coalition

Sun Day Campaign

Massachusetts

C-10 Research and Education Foundation

Citizens Awareness Network (MA Chapter)

Clean Water Action Alliance (MA Chapter)

Del Amo Action Committee

FlybyNews.com

Green Futures from Fall River

Lawrence Environmental Action Group, Inc.

Lawrence Environmental Justice Advisory Committee

Massachusetts Citizens for Clean Energy

MASSPIRG

Pilgrim Watch

Solar Design Associates, Inc.

Toxics Action Center

Women's Community Cancer Project

Michigan

Citizens' Resistance at Fermi Two
Clean Water Action (MI Chapter)
Coalition for a Nuclear-Free Great Lakes
Don't Waste Michigan
Environmental Health Project
PIRGIM
Radiological Evaluation Acton Project, Great Lakes (REAP-GL)
Sisters of Mercy, Regional Community of Detroit
West Michigan Environmental Action Council

Minnesota

Clean Water Action (MN Chapter)
Mankato Area Environmentalists
School Sisters of Notre Dame

Missouri

MoPIRG

Montana

Clark Fork Coalition
Montana Environmental Information Center
MontPIRG
Women's Voices for the Earth

Nebraska

Nebraskans for Peace

Nevada

Citizen Alert
Nevada Conservation League/Education Fund
Nevada Environmental Coalition, Inc.

New Hampshire

Clean Water Action (NH)
New Hampshire PIRG

New Jersey

Coalition for Peace and Justice in New Jersey
Grandmothers, Mothers and More for Energy Safety
Jersey Shore Nuclear Watch
N.J. Hiroshima/Nagasaki Remembrance Committee
New Jersey Audubon Society
New Jersey Environmental Federation
New Jersey PIRG
SJG Design
Unplug Salem

New Mexico

Los Alamos Study Group

New Mexico Environmental Law Center
New Mexico Physicians for Social Responsibility
New Mexico PIRG
Nuclear Watch of New Mexico
Southwest Climate Council
Southwest Research and Information Center
Street Solidarity

New York

Beacon Sloop Club
Cheektowaga Citizens' Coalition, Inc.
Citizens Awareness Network (NY Chapter)
Citizens' Environmental Coalition
Code Pink New York
Community Health and Environmental Coalition
Council On Intelligent Energy & Conservation Policy (CIECP)
Dominican Sisters of Hope
Environmental Advocates of New York
Long Island Neighborhood Network
Nuclear Free New York
Nuclear Weapons Education and Action Project
NYPIRG
People's Environmental Network of New York
Renewable Energy Long Island
Rockland (FUSE)
Saint Peter Damian Fraternity, Secular Franciscan Order at Saint Joseph Church
Toxic Waste/Lupus Coalition
Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk-U.S. Province

North Carolina

Appalachian Voices
Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League
Canary Coalition
Conservation Coalition of North Carolina
North Carolina PIRG
North Carolina Waste Awareness and Reduction Network (NCWARN)
Protect All Children's Environment
Western North Carolina Alliance

North Dakota

Clean Water Action (ND Chapter)

Ohio

Community Organizing Center
Earth Day Coalition
Independent Environmental Conservation & Activism Network
Ohio PIRG
Portsmouth/Piketon Residents for Environmental Safety and Security

Oklahoma

Citizens' Action for Safe Energy, Inc.

Oregon

Erik Sten - Portland City Commissioner

Oregon Citizen Utility Board

Oregon Natural Resources Council

Oregon State PIRG

Trout Unlimited - Oregon Council

Pennsylvania

ActionPA

Citizen Power

Clean Water Action (PA Chapter)

Energy Justice Network

International Development Alternatives Consortium (IDAC)

Jefferson Action Group

Lafayette Environmental Awareness and Protection (LEAP)

PennEnvironment

Philadelphia Physicians for Social Responsibility

Three Mile Island Alert, Inc.

Rhode Island

Clean Water Action (RI Chapter)

Rhode Island PIRG

South Carolina

Charleston Peace

ThinkingPeople

York County Greens

South Dakota

Clean Water Action (SD Chapter)

Tennessee

Cumberland Green Bioregional Council

Texas

Clean Water Action (TX Chapter)

Galveston Houston Association for Smog Prevention

Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance

Peace Action (Texas Chapter)

Public Citizen (TX Chapter)

Sustainable Energy and Economic Development Coalition (SEED)

Texas Center for Policy Studies

Texas Environmental Democrats

Texas Radiation Online

TexPIRG

Utah

HEAL Utah

Vermont

Vermont Energy Investment Corp.

Vermonters for a Clean Environment

VPIRG

Virginia

CLEAN (Citizens of Lee Environmental Action Network)

Clinch Coalition

Coalition for Jobs and the Environment

Devil's Fork Trail Club

Patrick Environmental Awareness Group (PEAG)

People's Alliance for Clean Energy (PACE)

Virginia Forest Watch

Washington

Community Coalition for Environmental Justice

The Backbone Campaign

WashPIRG

Waste Action Project

Washington, D.C.

Proposition One Committee

Stella Group, Ltd.

Voices Opposed to Environmental Racism

West Virginia

WV Citizen Action Group

Wisconsin

Citizen Power, Inc.

Clean Water Action (WI Chapter)

Clean Wisconsin

Peace and Justice Center

Wisconsin Citizens' Utility Board

WISPIRG

International Groups**Australia**

Friends of the Earth (Australia)

Austria

ATOMSTOPP International - WISE Austria

Center for Encounter and Active Non-Violence

GLOBAL 2000

PLAGE - Überparteiliche Plattform gegen Atomgefahren

Belgium

KWIA

Bulgaria

Bulgarian NGOs National Coalition “NO Belene NPP!”
CEIE/CEE Bankwatch Network

Canada

Citizens for Renewable Energy
David Suzuki Foundation
Sierra Club of Canada

Finland

Women Against Nuclear Power
Women For Peace

Germany

Nuclear-Free Future Award

Hungary

The ZHABA Collective

Netherlands

Global Anti-Nuclear Alliance

Russia

Russian Green Party “Green Russia”

Sweden

Swedish Antinuclear Movement (Folkkampanjen mot kaernkraft-kaernvapen)

Uganda

New Horizons, Women’s Education Centre

Ukraine

Ecoclub
NIRS/WISE Ukraine