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Details: Informational Hearing, 3/12/2009, re: nuclear power

(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2009-10

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on ... Commerce, Utilities, Energy, & Rail (SC-CUER)

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
 - (**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
 - (**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

Senate

Record of Committee Proceedings

Committee on Commerce, Utilities, Energy, and Rail

Nuclear Power

March 12, 2009

PUBLIC HEARING HELD

Present: (3) Senators Plale, Kreitlow and Cowles.
Absent: (4) Senators Wirch, Erpenbach, Harsdorf and
Kedzie.

Appearances For

- None.

Appearances Against

- None.

Appearances for Information Only

- Patrick Moore, Vancouver, BC — Dr., Clean and Safe Energy Coalition
- Nate Zolik, Madison — Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
- Jared Heck, Lisle — Nuclear Regulatory Commission
- Alan Barker, Lisle — Nuclear Regulatory Commission
- Frank Jablonski, Madison — Progressive Law Group
- Charlie Higley, Madison — Citizens Utility Board
- Katie Nekola, Madison — Clean Wisconsin
- Eugene Grecheck, Glen Allen — Dominion Resources
- Forest Ceel, Menomonee Falls — N56 W13777 Silver Spring Drive
- Mark Buss, Appleton — UA Local 400/Wisconsin Pipe Trades

Registrations For

- John Wallace, Two Rivers
- Joe Mrotek, Sheboygan
- Michael Hendricks, Lena — United Brotherhood of Carpenters
- David Jungbluth, Green Bay — IBEW #158
- David Korinek, Mishicot
- Fred Pospeschil, Two Rivers

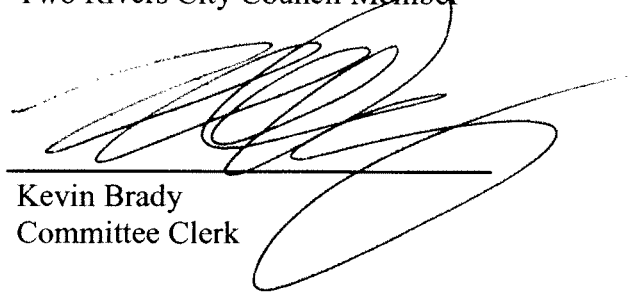
Registrations Against

- Ronna Swift, Appleton — Sierra Club

- Steve Brooks, Mount Horeb

Registrations for Information Only

- Jay Orvis, Two Rivers — Two Rivers City Council Member



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Brady', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and extends to the right of the line.

Kevin Brady
Committee Clerk

Nuclear Power: Wrong for Wisconsin

Charlie Higley
Citizens Utility Board of Wisconsin

before the
Senate Committee on Commerce, Utilities, Energy, and Rail
Assembly Committee on Energy and Utilities
Thursday, March 12, 2009

Citizens Utility Board

- Member supported nonprofit organization;
- 9,000 members statewide;
- Represent residential, farm, small commercial utility customers;
- Intervene in utility rate cases, new power plants, power lines;
- Saved Wisconsin ratepayers \$499 million since 2005
- www.wiscub.org

Outline

- Cost History
- Nuclear Costs Stopped the Industry
- Lifecycle Costs
- Risks That Could Increase Nuclear Costs
- Florida Case
- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

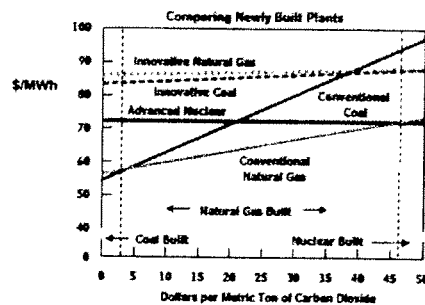
Cost History for Nuclear Power Plants

- All U.S. nuclear plants had cost overruns;
- Overruns: 2 to 4 times original cost estimate;
- Last 43 reactors to come on-line between 1983 and 1996:
 - \$3.8 billion (1,000 MW) in 1992
 - \$5.3 billion (1,000 MW) in 2008
- New reactors today:
\$8 to \$10 billion (1,000 MW)

High Costs Stopped Nuclear Industry

- No nuclear plants ordered since 1978;
- No plant ordered after 1973 has been built;
- Accident at Three Mile Island: March 28, 1979
- Accident occurred after last plant ordered;
- High costs stopped nuclear industry;

Life-Cycle Costs



Source: Congressional Budget Office, Nuclear Power's Role in Generating Electricity, 2008

Life-Cycle Costs (continued)

- Nuclear and Coal are both expensive
- Natural Gas Combined Cycle Plants are less expensive, even including carbon taxes
- Combined Cycle: Other Fuels
 - gas or liquid fuels from biomass
 - hydrogen (from renewable sources)
 - gas or liquid fuels from coal
 - not as costly, dangerous, polluting



Life-Cycle Costs (continued)

- Federal loan guarantees
 - \$18.5 billion in EPAct 2005;
 - “Without loan guarantees, we will not build nuclear power plants” (Michael Wallace, CEO, Constellation, July 2007);
 - Loan guarantees shift risks to taxpayers;
 - Additional \$50 billion in loan guarantees taken out of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act;

Risks That Could Increase Nuclear Costs

- No U.S. experience building new plants
 - 4 designs proposed in U.S.
 - 1 design: Finland, behind schedule, cost overruns
 - 1 design: Taiwan, behind schedule, cost overruns
- Supply chain choke points
 - labor
 - forging
 - special equipment
- Nuclear fuel supply

Nuclear Risks (continued)

- Construction delays increase cost
 - 10 year construction time
 - “disruptive technologies”
 - energy efficiency
 - biogas, bioliquids
 - solar
 - wind
 - falling costs
- Renewables, Efficiency growing fast

Florida

- \$17 billion for 2 reactor-plant;
- 2006: Legislators allowed Progress Energy to collect \$4 billion before plant is completed in 2017;
- Florida regulators approve project July 2008;
- January 2009: electric rates jump 25%, half for nuclear fee;
- Progress Energy has requested lowering the fee;
- Legislature may change funding; project in jeopardy;
- Plant won't receive NRC approval for 3-4 years;

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

- Cheaper than coal or nuclear;
- Generate \$billions each year for the Wisconsin economy;
- Create more jobs in Wisconsin than fossil or nuclear industries;
- Reduce flow of Wisconsin \$\$ out-of-state for fossil and nuclear fuels, technologies;
- Reduce pollution and nuclear waste;
- People can't afford to spend \$billions on the wrong technologies;





Testimony of
Dr. Patrick Moore
Chairman
Clean and Safe Energy Coalition

Before the

Senate Commerce, Utilities, Energy, and Rail committee
House Energy and Utilities committee

March 12, 2009

Chairman Plale, Chairman Soletski, Members of the Senate Commerce, Utilities, Energy, and Rail committee, Members of the Assembly Energy and Utilities committee. Thank you for inviting me to testify today as you consider the role that nuclear power could play in Wisconsin's energy future.

I am Dr. Patrick Moore, co-chairman of the Clean and Safe Energy (CASEnergy) Coalition. I am also one of the founding members of Greenpeace, and served as a director for fifteen years. Joining me as co-chair of the CASEnergy Coalition is former New Jersey Governor and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Christine Todd Whitman.

The CASEnergy Coalition is dedicated to educating the public about the benefits of nuclear energy. The Coalition brings together a variety of organizations and individuals representing all economic, social, and academic sectors. We have 1,900 members representing both sides of the political spectrum. They include community groups, environmental and conservation groups, minority organizations, professional associations, labor unions, economic development organizations and opinion leaders such as state legislators, mayors and business executives. In Wisconsin, our membership includes college professors, labor groups, and a variety of others who believe nuclear energy should be part of Wisconsin's future energy supply.

It is not only timely, but necessary to new nuclear power plants, and opening up that option for Wisconsin. Across the country, energy companies are pursuing options to build new nuclear facilities. Seventeen companies and consortia are currently considering the construction of more than thirty new reactors, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is reviewing building and operating permits for several others. Moreover, excavation and site preparation on the first advanced nuclear power plants is currently taking place in Southeastern region of the United States.

My remarks today will focus on three elements: first, I will stress how nuclear energy is essential to an environmentally sound energy future; second, I will discuss the benefits that nuclear energy offers our economy; and third, I will review nuclear energy's proven safety and performance record.

The Politics of Confrontation: My Greenpeace Years

To me, the rationale for pursuing these new nuclear plants is self-evident. The country is in dire need of new sources of electricity – and these sources need to be low- or carbon-free. I am convinced that nuclear energy is one clear option to meet this need, but I didn't always feel this way.

In the 1970s, while I was with Greenpeace, I opposed anything nuclear as did the rest of my colleagues. We failed to make any distinction between nuclear weapons and commercial nuclear power, and thought all things nuclear were evil. I now realize that we were wrong – just as wrong as if we had lumped together nuclear medicine and nuclear weapons. Nuclear medicine diagnoses and treats millions of Americans every year, and the isotopes it harnesses are produced in nuclear reactors. It is a beneficial use of nuclear technology, just as nuclear power is a beneficial use of that same technology.

Clearly, nuclear energy is vital to Wisconsin and the rest of the country. It is a virtually emissions-free energy source, and the nuclear industry has a proven track record of exceptional safety and performance. Nuclear power plants, and the electricity they produce, act as a leading engine for economic growth across the United States. As the country's largest source of clean, virtually carbon-free electricity, nuclear energy significantly reduces greenhouse gases, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulate pollution, and improves public health.

In the early 1970s, I joined a small committee that was meeting in the basement of the Unitarian Church in Vancouver. We organized a protest voyage against U.S. hydrogen bomb testing in Alaska and had tens of thousands marching in the streets. When the H-bomb was set off at Amchitka Island in November 1971, it was the last hydrogen bomb the U.S. ever detonated. It was the birth of Greenpeace, the organization I co-founded, spending 15 years in its top committee, helping to lead environmental campaigns around the world.

As part of our platform at Greenpeace, we made little distinction between commercial nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. It was the height of the Cold War and the height of the Vietnam War and we were operating in part out of fear of the future. We were so effective in our messaging that we assisted in stalling, and eventually derailing, nuclear power plant construction in the United States. By the 1980s, Greenpeace established itself as a strong voice on environmental issues. We grew to be a \$100 million organization with offices around the world. Yet, despite our success, I began to re-examine many environmental positions.

During my tenure at Greenpeace, we made real headway in a number of areas – nuclear testing, whales, toxic waste dumping, and seal hunt. We had won over a majority of the public in the industrialized democracies. Presidents and prime ministers were talking about the environment on a daily basis.

For me it was time to make a change. I had been against at least three or four things every day of my life for 15 years; I decided I'd like to be in favor of something for a change. I made the transition from the politics of confrontation to the politics of building consensus – in particular on issues of sustainability, through balancing the three related areas of environment, economy and society.

After all, there's no getting around the fact that every day 6 billion people wake up with real needs for food, energy and materials. The challenge for sustainability is to provide for those needs in ways that reduce negative impact on the environment.

Nuclear energy is one of the tools that has a very important role to play in the sustainability discussion.

Nuclear Power is Clean

To satisfy the dual requirements of generating electricity to meet the US demand and reducing greenhouse gases and other harmful emissions, nuclear energy must be a focal point of our

energy policy. Additionally, conservation and efficiency have important roles to play in shaping that demand.

Consider nuclear power's role in avoiding the emission of carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. In 2007, the use of nuclear energy helped the United States prevent the release of almost 700 million metric tons of carbon dioxide.

During the same period, three reactors in Wisconsin prevented the emission of 64,700 tons of sulfur dioxide, which leads to acid rain, and 12.6 million metric tons of carbon dioxide, or about the same amount of carbon dioxide emitted by nearly half of the passenger cars in Wisconsin.

Notably, even when analysts take into account emissions produced throughout the "life-cycle" of electricity production from nuclear energy, total carbon emissions are still comparable to that of wind power. These studies look at emissions from such activities as uranium mining, transportation of fuel and other activities that produce emissions. A 2002 study by the University of Wisconsin found that nuclear energy's life-cycle emissions are 17 metric tons of carbon dioxide-equivalents per gigawatt-hour whereas coal produces 1,041 tons and natural gas produces 622 tons. Wind power produces 14 metric tons – again, very similar to that of nuclear power. Put simply, nuclear is as clean as wind, but able to produce electricity on the same scale as coal and natural gas.

While nuclear plants help displace greenhouse gas emissions, their other waste by-products are managed responsibly and safely. As our country continues its pursuit of long-term disposal options for used fuel from these reactors, this material is safely stored at plant sites, where it can remain safely managed for an indefinite period of time. However, our nation should pursue options to recycle used nuclear material in order to retrieve the remaining energy in the fuel. This would reduce the toxicity of the used fuel and its volume before ultimate disposal in a repository.

Prominent environmental figures like Stewart Brand, founder of the Whole Earth Catalog, James Lovelock, author of the Gaia hypothesis, and the late Bishop Hugh Montefiore, Friends of the Earth former board member, have all professed their staunch support for nuclear energy as a practical means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while meeting the world's increasing energy demands. Most recently, four prominent UK environmental leaders including another former director of Greenpeace, Stephen Tindale, endorsed nuclear power.

Opponents of nuclear power will claim that nuclear advocates wish to stand in the way of wind and solar sources of power. Let me be clear, I do not. Wind and other renewable sources such as geothermal *must* be part of the energy mix going forward. Indeed they will likely generate more electricity than they do now, but these are intermittent sources of power. The variability of the wind results in wind turbines delivering about 20 percent of their stated capacity, on a worldwide average. Nuclear power plants in the U. S. now average over 90%. The sun does not shine at night and the technology of transforming sunlight into energy is inefficient. Nor do we have the ability to store electricity at a capacity needed to run our economy twenty-four hours a day. Renewable energy sources provide only a fraction – 2.5 percent – of our nation's energy

needs. Even with the rapid development of renewables, there will be a need for a large-scale carbon-free power source like nuclear power in our clean energy portfolio.

President Obama has advocated for plug-in hybrid cars and a high-speed electric rail to transform America's transportation system. This means that reliable, large-scale power will be needed to power high-speed commuter trains. For plug-in hybrid drivers, these consumers will arrive home from work and charge their cars from the electric power grid. The bottom line is that these changes, which will reduce our dependence on foreign oil, must include an increase in capacity for nuclear energy and renewable options. After all, the real environmental benefits of plug-in electric hybrids are only realized when these cars are charged on clean electricity sources.

Nuclear Plants Are Economic Development Engines

Nuclear plants also enrich surrounding communities. They provide high-paying jobs -- jobs that cannot be exported and are needed day-in and day-out. Each reactor employs between 400 and 700 people, and they are economic engines for their communities.

But job creation is not limited to only those with engineering degrees. A new nuclear plant can employ up to 2,400 skilled workers during the construction phase, and it is estimated that for every permanent job created at a plant, three jobs are created in the surrounding community. In other words, each reactor generates an estimated \$430 million a year in total output for a local community. It is no wonder that in public opinion polls, public support for nuclear plants in surrounding communities approaches 80 percent.

Nuclear Safety

Nuclear power has an impeccable track record of safe operation and production in the United States. In fact, according to the US Bureau of Labor, it is safer to work in the nuclear industry than it is to work in real estate or in the financial industry.

Safety technology used today is far superior to that of the 1950s, 60s and 70s, when the commercial industry was relatively young. Nuclear plants provide multiple layers of protection in their physical design, with large concrete and steel structures; they provide layer after layer of armed security. Nuclear reactor operators undergo years of training and re-training as part of their jobs. Operators know how to address virtually every possible operating scenario. Further, nuclear power plants feature multiple back-up safety systems, including automatic shut-down in the event it is needed. And the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission conducts daily independent plant inspections so that, if the plant is not operating safely, the regulator will shut it down. All of the NRC's evaluations and findings, including detailed inspection reports, are available the NRC web site (www.nrc.gov).

Based on these evaluations, the nuclear energy industry in 2008 had its safest year to date, according to the NRC's reactor oversight process. The NRC inspects and measures seventeen different performance indicators to evaluate plant safety. These performance indicators are designed to identify negative trends long before there is any reduction in safety at the plants.

Speaking from personal experience, I am overwhelmed by the presence of security whenever I visit a nuclear power plant. It seems everywhere I turn another security officer is on watch. If you have not had an opportunity to visit a nuclear power plant, I urge each member of these committees to visit a nuclear power plant and see first-hand the security that is in place.

Conclusion

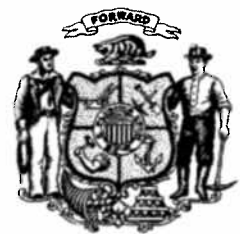
I want to conclude by emphasizing that nuclear energy – combined with the use of alternative energy sources like wind, geothermal and hydro – remains the only practical, safe and environmentally friendly means of meeting America's energy needs.

If America is to meet its ever increasing demands for energy and reduce its dependence on foreign energy sources, then the United States nuclear energy industry must be revitalized and provided the necessary means to grow. An important step in facilitating growth of a nuclear industry that will create jobs and help America meet its 21st century energy needs is for Wisconsin to overturn its moratorium on the construction of new nuclear plants.

The time for common sense and scientifically sound decisions on energy is now.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





Date?

Wisconsin State Building Trades Crafts

5941 WEST BLUEMOUND ROAD

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN 53213

Keep All of Wisconsin's Energy Options Open—Repeal the Nuclear Moratorium

To: Members of the Legislature

The Wisconsin State Building Trades is aware of the debate going on in Wisconsin and around the country regarding how we might meet future energy requirements and avoid the impacts of climate change. We and our members want to join the debate. We deserve to be heard on this important issue.

Future economic growth and population increase will drive staggering electricity demand. Electricity demand will increase by at least 25 percent between today and 2030. To address increasing demand for electricity, while simultaneously reducing the emissions impact on our fragile planet, our nation must first embrace energy efficiency and conservation in all phases of American life.

Of course, we should employ renewable generation capacity to the fullest extent possible. But there will be a gap between demand and supply. The diverse energy portfolio to fill that gap must include the only proven baseload generation technology with no air pollutants or greenhouse gas emissions during production and that technology is nuclear energy, a domestic energy source with fuel from the United States and reliable trading partners.

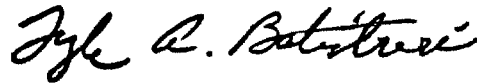
- 104 commercial reactors operating in 31 states, including three in Wisconsin, provided 20% of U.S. electricity last year with only 10% of installed electricity production capacity.
- As many as 4000 working men and woman will build and 700 permanent workers will operate new nuclear power plants.
- Nuclear plants operate nearly all the time. Coal plants operate at about 70% capacity, natural gas about 40%, wind and hydro 30% and solar 20%. Nuclear electricity production cost last year was 1.76 cents per kilowatt-hour—cheaper than coal and one-quarter the cost of electricity produced using natural gas.
- Nuclear energy emits no air pollutants or greenhouse gases during production. The 104 nuclear power plants generate 74 percent of all emission-free electricity. Nuclear plants, in fact, avoid carbon dioxide emissions equivalent annually to the carbon dioxide emissions from virtually all passenger cars in the United States.

Your willingness to factually consider nuclear energy is essential to Wisconsin's arriving at a thoughtful energy plan. But, equally important is expanding this debate into your community to highlight the critical role nuclear energy has in solving our energy crisis, preserving our air and water quality, and growing our economy.

We support:

1. Legislation to repeal the state moratorium on construction of new nuclear power plants.
2. If complete repeal of the moratorium is not possible, then legislation containing the moratorium modifications in the Governor's Task Force on Global Warming final report.
3. Continued partnerships between private industry and government to provide a well-trained workforce to construct and run this growing sector of the green economy.

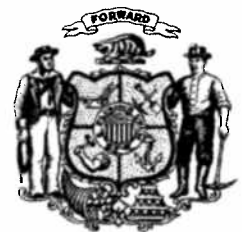
Sincerely,



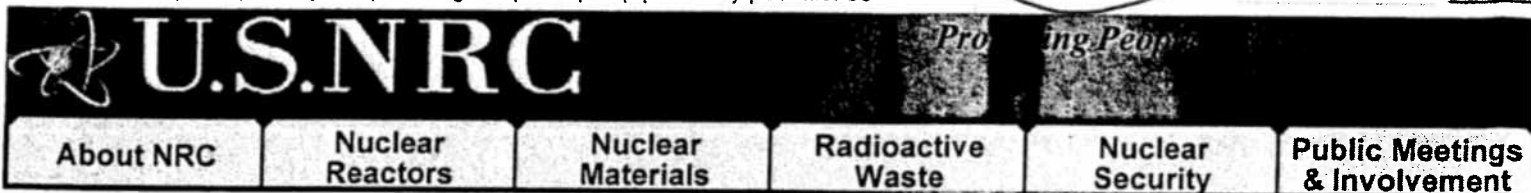
Lyle A. Balistreri
Chair



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Date?



Home > Electronic Reading Room > Document Collections > Enforcement Documents > Significant Enforcement Actions > Reactor Licensees > K

Escalated Enforcement Actions Issued to Reactor Licensees - K

A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z

- Kewaunee

Kewaunee - Docket No. 050-00305

NRC Action Number(s) and Facility Name	Action Type (Severity) & Civil Penalty (if any)	Date Issued	Description
EA-08-223 Kewaunee	NOV White	October 29, 2008	On October 29, 2008, a Notice of Violation was issued for a violation associated with a White Significance Determination finding. Specifically, the licensee failed to identify that Kewaunee's emergency plan emergency action levels specifying instrument threshold values were beyond the limits of the effluent radiation monitors' capabilities to accurately measure and indicate. As a result, action directed by the State and local emergency response plans, which rely on information provided by the licensee, could have potentially delayed minimum initial offsite response measures.
EA-07-058 Kewaunee	NOV Yellow	April 3, 2007	On April 3, 2007, a Notice of Violation was issued for a violation associated with a Yellow Significance Determination Finding involving the failure of licensee personnel to follow procedural requirements and enter a fuel leak on the "A" emergency diesel generator into the corrective action program on June 28, 2006, when the leak was first identified. This failure resulted in the leak not being appropriately evaluated and repaired until August 17, 2006. The NRC has determined that this failure is a performance deficiency and is also a violation of the licensee's Technical Specifications which state, in part, that written procedures and administrative policies shall be established, implemented, and maintained.
EA-05-176 Kewaunee	NOV Yellow	12/21/05	On December 21, 2005, a Notice of Violation was issued for a violation associated with a Yellow SDP finding involving the licensee's failure to ensure that the safety-related function of the auxiliary feedwater pumps, the 480 volt safeguards buses, the safe shutdown panel, the emergency diesel generators, and the 4160 volt safeguards buses, each Class 1 systems or components, would be protected from serious flooding or excessive steam releases as a result of random or seismically induced failures of

			non-Class 1 systems in the turbine building. The violation cited the licensee's failure to implement design control measures as specified in 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix, B, Criterion III, "Design Control".
EA-05-157 Kewaunee	NOV White	09/16/2005	On September 16, 2005, a Notice of Violation was issued for a violation associated with a White SDP finding involving the licensee's failure to implement design control measures to verify and check the adequacy of the auxiliary feedwater (AFW) system design to mitigate all postulated accidents. Specifically, the AFW pump discharge pressure trip switches would not have protected the AFW pumps from air ingestion during natural events such as a tornado and seismic events. In addition, the AFW system design would not have protected the pumps from "runout" conditions that may be encountered during the other design and license basis scenarios.
EA-05-021 Kewaunee	NOV White	05/05/2005	On May 5, 2005, a Notice of Violation was issued for a violation associated with a White SDP finding involving the licensee's inability to rapidly close the containment equipment hatch during cold shutdown conditions due to an interference. The violation cited the inadequate design of the rail system that was installed in the containment to facilitate the reactor vessel head replacement activities and the licensee's failure to have adequate procedures with specific instructions for rapid removal of the interior rail to allow expeditious hatch closure.
EA-03-105 Kewaunee	NOVCP SL III \$ 60,000	12/30/2003	On December 30, 2003, a Notice of Violation and Proposed Imposition of Civil Penalty in the amount of \$60,000 was issued for a Severity Level III violation involving the licensee's failure to implement effective monitoring procedures to provide reasonable assurance that personnel with access are fit for duty, and the failure to conduct an investigation of the circumstances or evaluate the risk involved in continued unescorted access of an employee after detecting evidence of behavior which may have impaired the job performance of an employee who had unescorted access to the Kewaunee Nuclear Plant.
EA-02-204 Kewaunee	NOV White	12/02/2002	On December 2, 2002, a Notice of Violation was issued for a violation associated with a white SDP finding involving the lack of a fixed fire suppression system for a particular fire area. The violation cited the licensee's failure to comply with the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix R, Section III.G.2, by not providing a fixed fire suppression system for the particular fire area.
EA-00-214 Kewaunee	NOV (White)	02/28/2001	On February 28, 2001, a Notice of Violation was issued for a violation associated with a White SDP finding involving the emergency response staffing drills. The violation was based on the fact that timely augmentation of response capabilities was not available and that the licensee failed to correct deficiencies that were identified as a result of several monthly drill failures.
EA-99-183	NOV	10/19/1999	Failure to ensure full implementation of the NRC-

Kewaunee	(SL III)		approved plant security manual and falsification of security-related records.
EA-97-235 Kewaunee	NOV (SL III)	08/06/1997	Old Design issues.
EA-97-087 Kewaunee	NOVCP (SL III) \$ 50,000	07/11/1997	Inadequate surveillance. Testing of RHR & AFW pumps.

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EA-96-367 Perry 1	NOV (SL III)	11/06/1996	Criteria XVI - associated with cooling systems emergency closed cooling system and CRHVAC chillers.
EA-96-253 Perry 1	NOVCP (SL II) \$160,000	10/09/1996	Discrimination against 5 insulators who sued licensee after they were contaminated while working in plant.

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Pilgrim 1 - Docket No. 050-00293

NRC Action Number (s) and Facility Name	Action Type (Severity) & Civil Penalty (if any)	Date Issued	Description
EA-05-039 Pilgrim	NOVCP (SL III) \$ 60,000	07/14/2005	On July 14, 2005, a Notice of Violation and Proposed Imposition of Civil Penalty in the base amount of \$60,000 for a Severity Level III problem consisting of three violations was issued. The violations involved the failure of the Control Room Supervisor (CRS), the Reactor Operator (RO), and the Shift Manager (SM) to follow the requirements in 10 CFR 26.20 and procedures in Technical Specification 5.4.1. The violations cited: (1) the CRS being asleep, and therefore, not in a condition to respond to plant conditions or emergencies (Violation A); (2) the RO observing the CRS asleep, but failing to take immediate actions to awaken the CRS, inform appropriate site personnel, and initiate a CR (Violation B.1) and the SM failing to inform appropriate site personnel and initiate a CR (Violation B.2); and (3) the CRS not being relieved of duty and for-cause FFD tested (Violation C).
EA-98-191 Pilgrim 1	NOVCP (SL III) \$ 55,000	05/19/1998	Equipment failures associated with protected area assessment system.
EA-96-271 Pilgrim 1	NOV (SL III)	10/21/1996	Improper setpoints for 12 containment electrical penetration circuit breakers.

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Point Beach 1 & 2 - Docket Nos. 050-00266; 050-00301

NRC Action Number (s) and Facility Name	Action Type (Severity) & Civil Penalty (if any)	Date Issued	Description
EA-06-274 Point Beach 1 & 2	NOV SL III	01/29/2007	On January 29, 2007, a Notice of Violation was issued for a Severity Level III violation. The violation involved the licensee's failure to update its FSAR in 1983 which, combined with the licensee's continued failure to fully understand the facility's licensing and design basis since that time, impacted the licensee's ability in 2005 to understand the current Point Beach licensing and design basis, and resulted in a performance deficiency. The performance deficiency also impacted the NRC's ability to perform its regulatory function. The licensee's failure to update

			design basis represented a challenge to the regulatory envelope upon which certain activities were licensed, such as reactor vessel head lift activities.
EA-06-178 Point Beach 1 & 2	ORDER	01/03/2007	On January 3, 2007, a Confirmatory Order (Effective Immediately) was issued to the Nuclear Management Company, LLC (NMC), documenting a number of actions the licensee has agreed to take as part of an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) settlement agreement. An ADR session was held at the licensee's request to address the apparent violation of 10 CFR 50.7, "Employee protection." The actions the licensee has agreed to take include: (1) revising NMC's policy on writing corrective action program reports; (2) training NMC supervisory employees on safety conscious work environment principles; (3) communicating NMC's safety culture policy to its employees; and (4) conducting a safety culture survey at the Point Beach Nuclear Plant. As reflected in the Order, in response to these actions, the NRC agreed not to pursue further enforcement action on this issue.
EA-05-192 Point Beach 1 & 2	NOV (White)	12/16/2005	On December 16, 2005, a Notice of Violation was issued for a violation associated with a White Significance Determination Process (SDP) finding. The violation of 10 CFR 50.47 associated with a White finding involved the licensee's failure to self-identify the untimely declaration of an Alert classification during an August 2002 emergency preparedness (EP) drill.
EA-05-191 Point Beach 1 & 2	NOVCP (SL III) \$60,000	12/16/2005	On December 16, 2005, a Notice of Violation and Proposed Imposition of Civil Penalty in the amount of \$60,000 was issued for a Severity Level III violation of 10 CFR 50.9 involving the licensee's failure to provide accurate information to the NRC associated with a critique of an August 2002 Emergency Preparedness drill.
EA-03-181 Point Beach 1 & 2	NOVCP (SL III) \$60,000	03/17/2004	On March 17, 2004, a Notice of Violation and Proposed Imposition of Civil Penalty in the amount of \$60,000 was issued for a Severity Level III violation involving changes made to the Emergency Action Level scheme that reduced the effectiveness of the Emergency Plan without requesting and receiving prior NRC approval.
EA-03-057 Point Beach 1 & 2	NOV (Red)	12/11/2003	On December 11, 2003, a Notice of Violation for a violation associated with a Red SDP finding involving the potential common mode failure of all trains of the auxiliary feedwater (AFW) system. The violation cited the licensee's failure to establish adequate measures to assure that the AFW system design bases were correctly translated into specifications, drawings, procedures, and instructions (modification packages).
EA-03-059 Point Beach 1 & 2	NOV (Red)	04/02/2003	On April 2, 2003, a Notice of Violation was issued for a violation associated with a previously identified Red SDP finding involving the potential common mode failure of the auxiliary feedwater (AFW) pumps due to inadequate operator response to a loss of instrument air. The violation cited the licensee's failure to implement corrective actions to preclude repetition of

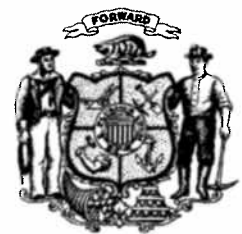
			a significant condition adverse to quality associated with an AFW system potential common mode failure.
EA-02-031 Point Beach 1 & 2	NOV (Red)	07/12/2002	On July 12, 2002, a Notice of Violation was issued for a violation associated with a Red SDP finding involving the potential common mode failure of the auxiliary feedwater (AFW) pumps during specific accident scenarios. The violation cited the licensee's failure to ensure that activities affecting quality were prescribed by documented instructions, procedures, or drawings, of a type appropriate to the circumstances and failure from at least 1997 to 2001, to promptly identify and correct a condition adverse to quality.
EA-02-090 Point Beach 2	NOV (White)	06/13/2002	On June 13, 2002, a Notice of Violation was issued for a violation associated with a White SDP finding involving the self-revealing failure of safety injection system pump 2P-15B due to nitrogen gas binding. The violation cited the licensee's failure to promptly identify and correct a significant condition adverse to quality regarding leakage from the 2T-34A safety injection accumulator.
EA-99-002 Point Beach 1 & 2	NOV (SL III)	04/28/1999	Violation occurred because the on-shift crew, the operations support group, and the WEPCo site management team failed to acknowledge the validity of the temperature alarm and appreciate the significance of low temperature readings for the Unit 1 SI pumps' minimum flow line.
EA-97-075 Point Beach 1 & 2	NOV (SL III)	08/08/1997	Multiple violations associated with corrective action program and application of Technical Specification requirements.
EA-96-273 Point Beach 1 & 2	NOVCP (SL III) \$325,000	12/03/1996	The action was based on two inspections performed at the Point Beach Nuclear Power Plant. Three Severity Level III problems were cited for failing to adequately: 1) conduct control room activities; 2) maintain plant configuration control; and 3) conduct independent fuel dry cask storage activities. In addition, a single Severity Level III violation was cited for the licensee failing to take prompt corrective actions following the identification that the Technical Specifications for the safety-related service water system were non-conservative.

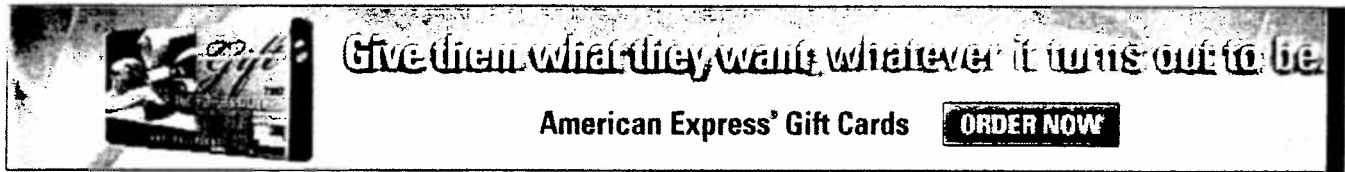
Prairie Island 1 & 2 - Docket Nos. 050-00282; 050-00306

NRC Action Number (s) and Facility Name	Action Type (Severity) & Civil Penalty (if any)	Date Issued	Description
EA-08-272 Prairie Island 1	NOV (White)	01/27/2009	On January 27, 2009, a Notice of Violation was issued to Northern States Power Company for a violation of Technical Specifications associated with a White Significance Determination finding at Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant. Specifically, the licensee failed to adequately control the position of a normally open pressure switch block valve for the Unit 1 turbine-driven auxiliary feedwater pump. The valve was inadvertently left closed, causing the turbine-



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Friday, Jul. 18, 2008

French Doubts Up After Nuke Mishaps

By Bruce Crumley / Paris

Security breaches at nuclear power plants are never a laughing matter. But with oil prices at near-record levels and the rush on to find safe, clean sources of energy, news of leaks at two different French nuclear sites could not have come at a worse time. Concern over the incidents is rekindling questions about the safety of France's giant nuclear power grid and could complicate the country's quest to become the world's leading purveyor of nuclear technology.

On Friday France's Nuclear Safety Agency (ASN) revealed that damage to an underground conduit at the Romans-sur-Isère plant in southwestern France had allowed radioactive waste to leak, though in quantities so small, it said, to have "not at all affected the environment." But it was not the first such incident. The ASN announced July 7 that uranium-tainted waste liquids from the Tricastin nuclear plant, in southern France 30 miles northwest of Avignon, had leaked into surrounding rivers and topsoil. Inhabitants of the Vaucluse department were ordered to refrain from drinking water, eating locally caught fish, and irrigating crops with potentially contaminated water. The water prohibition remains in effect for thousands of parched locals as inspections lumber on. "We're being treated like sub-citizens," protested Yves Beck, mayor of neighboring town Bollène to the AFP. Qualifying what he called slow and unsympathetic response of authorities to the situation "unacceptable," Beck warns legal action for hardship and losses suffered may be taken. "We've told residents of Bollène, 'Don't sign anything unless you've sought the help of a lawyer.'"

Fighting words indeed — and over much more than simply safe drinking water. Nearly 80% of France's electricity is nuclear-generated, and French giant Areva has made a massive international business of constructing and managing nuclear facilities. France has made nuclear power a national priority since the early 1970s as French governments of all political stripes sought to lessen the nation's dependence on foreign oil. The French public embraced nukes as the rest of Europe and the world said "no thanks." The result is France today has the second-largest nuclear network behind the U.S., and is the world's largest net exporter of electricity — a business expected to net around \$4.5 billion in profit this year.

All that has helped Areva become a world leader in the nuclear field, providing one-stop shopping with construction, management, maintenance, waste and storage solutions. Under president Anne Lauvergeon, the firm has been an aggressive player everywhere from China to Britain and a formidable rival to American companies General Electric and Westinghouse even on American turf. However, news of nuclear incidents anywhere on the planet — particularly in Areva's own backyard — tends to squelch the appeal of nuclear power, record oil prices or not.

What is troubling about both recent French accidents is that they involved nuclear waste, the disposal of which is perhaps the major curb to nuclear power's appeal. Areva cited human error in the Tricastin incident and said it had fired the responsible director after an internal investigation found "evident lack of coordination" between administrative and working units had allowed contaminated waste to seep through the plant's theoretically impenetrable safety lining. Areva also faulted local operators for significant delays in alerting authorities once the breach had been identified.

The ASN's said the Romans-sur-Isère incident involved smaller quantities of radioactive matter and was caused by an entirely different problem than the Tricastin case. But the agency also noted the leak discovered Friday may have first occurred "several years back." Environmental groups have cited the breaches as more evidence of nuclear power's spotty safety record, and anti-nuke organization Greenpeace noted the government's "belated concern" reflected its unquestioning confidence in the technology's reliability.

Though both cases have been assigned the lowest rating on the seven-point scale of nuclear accidents, officials are moving to protect France's nuclear reputation. Even before news of Friday's incident broke, French Ecology Minister Jean-Louis Borloo ordered inspections of all 58 French nuclear installations and checks on radiation levels in the underground aquifers surrounding them. Borloo stressed there was no grounds to anticipate additional breaches. "I don't want people feeling we're hiding anything from them," Borloo told the daily *Le Parisien*.

Barring any further revelation of French breaches, this month's twin mishaps won't alter France's official policy on the technology — nor are they alone likely to undermine the French public's approval of it as a clean, cheap energy source. But should Borloo's inspections turn up additional failings, France's long-term bet on nuclear power could face shakier odds.

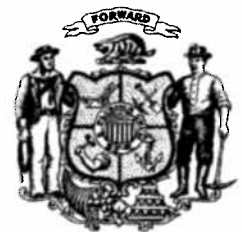
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The Washington Post

Controversy Over Yucca Mountain May Be Ending

By Steve Vogel
Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, March 4, 2009; A13

More than two decades after Yucca Mountain in Nevada was selected to be the national nuclear waste repository, the controversial proposal may finally be put to rest by the Obama administration.

In keeping with a pledge President Obama made during the campaign, the budget released last week cuts off almost all funding for creating a permanent burial site for a large portion of the nation's radioactive nuclear waste at the site in the Nevada desert. Congress selected the location in 1987 and reaffirmed the choice in 2002. About \$7.7 billion has been sunk into the project since its inception.

"Yucca Mountain is not an option, and the budget clearly reflects that," Stephanie Mueller, a spokeswoman for the Department of Energy, said yesterday.

Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.), a staunch opponent of the Yucca project, called the Obama action "our most significant victory to date in our battle to protect Nevada from becoming the country's toxic wasteland."

Reid, who during primary season helped extract campaign promises from Obama and then-Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton to stop Yucca Mountain, added: "President Obama recognizes that the proposed dump threatens the health and safety of Nevadans and millions of Americans. His commitment to stop this terrible project could not be clearer."

Less clear is what will happen next with the nation's growing stockpile of nuclear waste.

"That's a great question," said Geoffrey H. Fettus, an attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council.

The budget provides no answers as to what the administration proposes to do with the approximately 57,700 tons of nuclear waste at more than 100 temporary sites around the country, or with the approximately 2,000 tons generated each year by nuclear power plants. The Yucca site was designed specifically to handle spent fuel rods from the nation's 103 nuclear generators.

"The new administration is starting the process of finding a new strategy for nuclear waste," Mueller said.

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Keeping the waste at temporary sites is an option in the short term, but experts in the field say it will not serve as a long-term answer for the problem of radioactive waste, which will need to be kept safely stored for at least 1,000 years.

Others have advocated reprocessing much of the spent fuel, as is being done in France, but this too is fraught with problems, according to some experts.

Ultimately, Fettus said, the government will have to find a new site or sites for permanent storage of nuclear waste.

The Nuclear Energy Institute, which represents the nuclear industry, favors the creation of a "blue-ribbon commission to assess where we go," spokesman Steve Kerkeres said.

The Bush administration last year submitted a license application to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and hoped to have the repository operating by 2020. The Obama administration is not withdrawing the application because of concerns about lawsuits but, nonetheless, insists the Yucca Mountain project will not go forward.

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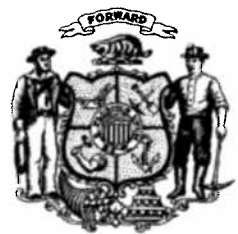
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POLITICO

Yukking it up over Yucca Mountain

By: Erika Lovley

March 11, 2009 04:30 AM EST

It's a very popular destination.

First was the Bridge to Nowhere, then came the Road to Nowhere. And now, with the release of President Barack Obama's 2010 budget proposal, there's the Tunnel to Nowhere.

This time, though, nowhere is in Nevada, not Alaska. It's about 90 miles northwest of Las Vegas, deep inside Yucca Mountain, where over the past 20-plus years the federal government has spent about \$10 billion studying and digging a tunnel as part of the nation's first nuclear waste repository. But since Obama's budget eliminates most funding for the proposed facility, what's left is a \$10 billion hole in the ground.

And boy, are they having a great time with the Yucca jokes.

"Maybe they can put the Obama Presidential Library down there," quipped Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform.

"They could turn it into a giant Tunnel of Love," said Burton Richter, a Stanford professor and Nobel Prize-winning physicist. "When I was a kid, you could take your girlfriend floating down the Tunnel of Love and do some necking, as we called it. Yucca would give you five miles of tunnel — that's some serious necking."

"Maybe we can put Rush Limbaugh in there," said Elliott Negin, spokesman for the Union of Concerned Scientists. "I don't think it will contain him though. He's such a force."

Despite the levity, the Yucca Mountain facility, located deep in the desert on the federal government's Nevada Test Site, was planned to deal with a very serious problem — what to do with the spent nuclear fuel rods and solidified high-level radioactive waste from America's nuclear power and defense industries. Those deadly byproducts are now stored in more than 120 temporary waste storage sites scattered in 39 states across the country; Yucca Mountain, which originally was supposed to open in 1998, was meant to be the first long-term, national solution.

"After over 20 years of research and billions of dollars of carefully planned and reviewed scientific fieldwork, the Department of Energy has found that a repository at Yucca Mountain brings together the location, natural barriers and design elements most likely to protect the health and safety of the public, including those Americans living in the immediate vicinity, now and long into the future," according to a background statement by the Energy Department.

But Obama has moved to cut funding for the controversial project.

"Obama has emphasized that nuclear waste storage [at Yucca] is not an option, so his budget is a reflection of that," said Energy Department spokeswoman Stephanie Mueller.

In a 2007 letter to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) and Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairwoman Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), Obama said, "The selection of Yucca Mountain has failed, the time for debate on this site is over, and it is time to start exploring new alternatives for safe, long-term solutions based on sound science."

Among the problems Obama cited were long-term safety risks, security concerns associated with shipping nuclear waste to the site, opposition by most Nevada leaders and the likelihood that the project would fall further behind schedule and cost billions more to complete.

"Among the possible alternatives that should be considered are finding another state willing to serve as a permanent national repository or creating regional storage repositories," Obama's letter said.

The state of the economy also made the Yucca project a tempting target for Obama's budget ax. The Energy Department projects that the cost for finishing the site and operating it from 1983 to 2133 will total \$96 billion.

But supporters of the Yucca Mountain project say it is a viable solution to the nation's nuclear waste dilemma. In congressional testimony last fall, Ward Sproat, then-director of the Energy Department's Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management, said that "for each year beyond 2017 that the repository's opening is delayed, the department estimates that U.S. taxpayers' potential liability to contract holders who have paid into the Nuclear Waste Fund will increase by approximately \$500 million."

That's the sort of argument that appeals to anti-tax watchdog Norquist, who is also concerned about stunting the nuclear energy industry.

"Just because we have a new president doesn't mean we restart and rethink all of the projects from the last 25 years," he said. "This is childish. The administration has not thought this through."

But none of the main agencies or interests groups involved in the Yucca facility have any idea what to do with it.

"It's the closest I've ever been to nowhere in this country," said Eliot Brenner, spokesman for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. "You can turn 360 degrees and see nothing man-made. It gives you a creepy feeling of being absolutely alone."

Much of the Nevada delegation has been so focused on shutting down the Yucca project that brainstorming alternative uses never came to the forefront, aides say. Even Reid, who has fought the project since he arrived in Congress in 1987, hasn't a clue what to do with the five-mile tunnel.

"I think people have either been on the side of building the dump or killing the dump," said one Senate aide familiar with the debate. "I don't think anyone's been thinking about what we do with this hill. I think that's something everyone assumed we'd figure out after the fact."

Some Nevada lawmakers have signaled they are open to suggestions.

"No idea is a bad idea, as long as it doesn't include deadly nuclear waste," said Republican Sen. John Ensign. "Yucca Mountain could be home to an underground research lab or a renewable energy facility if there is potential."

Democratic Rep. Shelley Berkley's thought: Plaster the area around the tunnel with solar energy panels. But transmitting the power to the places that need it, such as Las Vegas, would be a challenge.

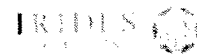
Meanwhile, the site continues to spawn a cottage industry of Yucca yuks.

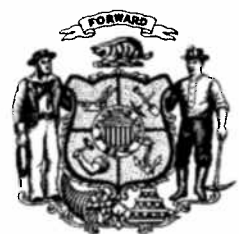
"She's called it a boondoggle, a waste, a dinosaur whose days are numbered, a dying beast," said David Cherry, Berkley's spokesman. "She's said the first train carrying nuclear waste into the mountain will have to run over her body."

The Marine Corps has used giant mountain caves to store everything from cots to ammunition, so perhaps it would be interested in a little real estate in the Nevada desert?

"Other than Osama bin Laden, I don't think we have anything hidden away in a cave," said Pentagon spokesman Brian Whitman. "Just kidding."

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Nuclear power plants being revived worldwide

But what to do with radioactive waste remains an issue

By Laurie Goering

Tribune correspondent

March 11, 2009

STOCKHOLM—A year after the Three Mile Island nuclear accident, amid panic worldwide about the safety of nuclear energy, Sweden voted to ban construction of new nuclear power plants and phase out its existing ones.

Now, like many countries across Europe, it is changing its mind. Last month, the government proposed allowing the construction of new reactors to replace the country's aging ones, which provide nearly half the nation's electricity.

Swedes have made their peace with nuclear plants, not only because memories have faded and safety records improved after 30 years, but also because reactors are seen as one of the few options available to nations wanting to rapidly slash greenhouse gas emissions.

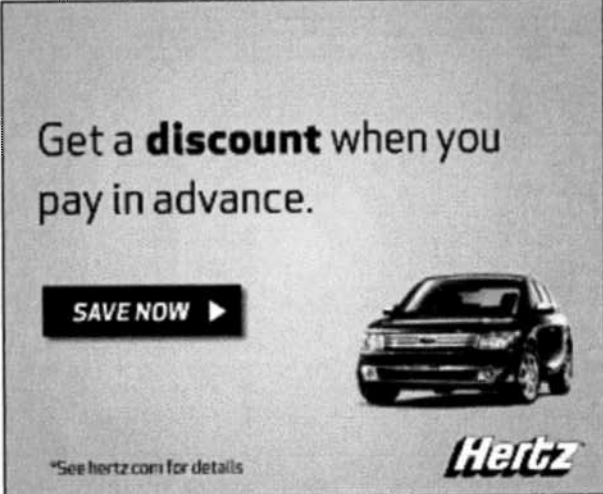
"People shout about wind power, but it's only providing 2 percent" of Sweden's electricity, said Ake Hjort, a Swedish energy engineer. "To replace one nuclear plant you need 5,000 to 6,000 windmills. For us, it's not a question of wind power or nuclear power but the proper mix."

As the Obama administration and other governments around the world look for ways to reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels and cut greenhouse gas emissions, nuclear power is enjoying a revival, even among some of its toughest critics. And some nations where green movements once railed against nukes now are at the forefront of finding solutions to lingering problems such as long-term storage of radioactive waste.

The United States, which has more than 100 working reactors—the world's largest number—has 32 new plants either planned or proposed. China, in an effort to cut air pollution from coal plants and feed huge new demand for power, is building 11 reactors and laying plans for nearly 100 more.


Europe, which has focused on building renewable-energy capacity to cut greenhouse gas emissions, now acknowledges that meeting its tough targets will be nearly impossible without new nuclear plants.

"It's the only large-scale ... technology we have for zero emission power," said Ian Cronshaw, head of



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energy diversification for the Paris-based International Energy Agency.

Enthusiasm for nuclear power is coming from some remarkable quarters. Italy, which shut down its last two nuclear plants after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986, now plans to build eight to 10 new reactors to cut its heavy reliance on imported energy. Finland and Sweden are well on their way to building long-term nuclear waste storage.

Even oil-producing nations such as Venezuela and the United Arab Emirates are among more than 40 new nations interested in acquiring nuclear power.

The two energy giants, like Russia, "want to sell their oil and gas at nice prices to people hooked on it and not use too much domestically," said Steve Kidd, director of strategy and research for the World Nuclear Association, a London-based nuclear power lobbying group.

President Barack Obama, while promising to "safely harness nuclear power" for the U.S. energy mix, has so far shown more enthusiasm for renewable power than nuclear plants. On Thursday, his energy secretary also confirmed that a 27-year effort to build a national nuclear waste depository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada is being abandoned.

But Britain's government, which five years ago held a similarly skeptical view of nuclear power, "today realizes renewables can't do everything," Kidd said. With production from Britain's aging gas fields dropping about 8 percent a year, the country now plans to use up to six new reactors to make up some of the shortfall, Cronshaw said.

Whether the more than 370 reactors proposed or planned worldwide are ever built remains in considerable doubt, nuclear experts say. Nuclear power plants are more expensive than most fossil-fuel alternatives, and finding financing for them will prove difficult as the world grapples with widespread recession.

Long-term storage of nuclear waste also remains a serious problem. Finland and Sweden, the only countries in the world closing in on a long-term solution for high-level nuclear waste, plan to put theirs in underground bedrock tunnels but are still grappling with issues of the long-term security of the material, which will remain radioactive for a hundred thousand years.

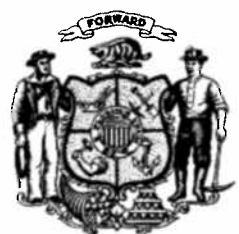
France manages its own nuclear waste problem in part by reprocessing spent fuel, which produces new usable uranium but also, controversially, the plutonium needed for nuclear weapons.

lgoering@tribune.com

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Wisconsin's Balance of Power: The Campaign to Repeal the Nuclear Moratorium

Submitted by Diane Farsetta on March 26, 2009 - 12:59pm. [global warming](#) [lobbying](#) [nuclear power](#) [public relations](#)

Wisconsin law sets two conditions that must be met before new nuclear power plants can be built in the state. One is that there must be "a federally licensed facility" for high-level nuclear waste. In addition, the proposed nuclear plant "must be economically advantageous to ratepayers."



It's a law that the nuclear power industry doesn't like. Given the near-death of the planned waste storage facility at Yucca Mountain, and the estimated \$6 to \$12 billion cost (pdf) of building one nuclear reactor -- not to mention the lack of interest from private investors and the tanking economy -- Wisconsin's law effectively bans new nuclear plants in the state, for the foreseeable future.

Earlier this year, the major U.S. industry group Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) registered four lobbyists in Wisconsin. NEI is lobbying state legislators on issues related to "nuclear generation ... engineering education and other issues related to state policies on energy, job creation, and environmental law," according to disclosure forms.

It's the first time that NEI has had lobbyists in Wisconsin since at least 1996, though the group has organized public and media events here, especially in recent years. As it does on the national level, NEI argues that building new nuclear power plants would bring good jobs to Wisconsin while helping reduce the state's greenhouse gas emissions, especially from coal-fired power plants. NEI's foray into Wisconsin politics is logical and not at all surprising - until you compare it to the group's apparent lack of interest in other states with similar laws.

Moratorium nation

Wisconsin passed its moratorium on new nuclear plants in 1983, the same year that the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a similar measure in California. While the federal government decides "how to build and operate nuclear plants," the Supreme Court found that California's restrictions were allowable, as "Congress has not required States to 'go nuclear.'"

California still bans new nuclear plants, until there is "a demonstrated technology or means for the disposal of high-level nuclear waste." The size of the state and its growing energy needs led the trade publication *Nuclear News* to call California (pdf) "critical, not just for the economic prospects of the nuclear industry but for the environmental impact on and energy supply adequacy for the nation's most populous state."

Yet NEI doesn't have a single lobbyist in California. There are local people and groups who want to repeal the state ban. Assemblyman Chuck DeVore has tried repeatedly, through the legislature and through a ballot initiative campaign, even setting up a group called Power for California. However, NEI's involvement has been minimal. When the Fresno Nuclear Energy Group held its first public event in 2007, NEI's high-profile spokesman, former Greenpeace activist turned industry PR consultant Patrick Moore, was the main attraction.

It's not just California and Wisconsin. More than a dozen states effectively ban new nuclear power plants. Minnesota law simply says the state will not approve "the construction of a new nuclear-powered electric generating plant," though a bill to repeal this language has been introduced. Connecticut has a moratorium similar to California's. Before West Virginia can consider a nuclear plant, there must be a waste facility "proven safe, functional and effective" over two years, and nuclear power must be "economically feasible." In Oregon, voters must approve all nuclear projects, and no nuclear plants can be built until there is a federally-licensed "adequate repository for the disposal of the high-level radioactive waste."

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Aerial view of Yucca Mountain

Kentucky not only requires a high-level nuclear waste facility "in actual operation" by the time the new plant would require it, but also wants to know "the cost of [waste] disposal ... with reasonable certainty." (A bill to remove these restrictions is working its way through Kentucky's legislature.) Maine and Massachusetts also require an operational waste facility. Montana voters must approve building a nuclear power plant, its "radioactive materials" must "be contained ... with no

reasonable chance of intentional or unintentional escape or diversion," and its owner must post a bond worth 30 percent "of the total capital cost of the facility," to ensure adequate funds to close the plant. Illinois requires either a federally-approved waste disposal strategy or the state legislature's approval for the project. New Jersey law necessitates a "safe ... proposed method for disposal of radioactive waste material." In Pennsylvania, a nuclear plant can only be built if it provides a cheaper alternative to coal plants, or if the energy needs cannot be met by coal.

Of all these states, NEI has lobbyists in just three. Michael McGarey, of NEI's Washington DC office, is registered in Kentucky, where he reported lobbying expenditures in March 2008 and February 2009. McGarey's also a registered lobbyist in Pennsylvania, where he was active in early 2007. Then there's Wisconsin, where NEI recently registered four lobbyists: McGarey, two other DC-based employees and a Madison lawyer. That's not bad for a state where, even if the moratorium were repealed, "its [energy] demand growth may still be too modest to encourage new reactor projects," according to *Nuclear News*.

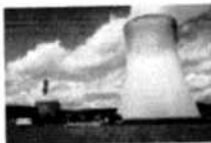
Madison's pro-nuclear environmentalist

NEI's man in Madison is Frank Jablonski, an attorney who specializes in environmental and consumer issues. He recently testified before two state legislative committees, urging them to repeal Wisconsin's moratorium. "Jablonski is the former general counsel of Wisconsin's Environmental Decade, the group now known as Clean Wisconsin," reported the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*. At the same hearing, the current "head of energy policy" for Clean Wisconsin, a local environmental non-profit, "cautioned against expanding nuclear power in the state."

Jablonski readily fits the "environmentalist who just happens to support nuclear power, much to the chagrin of their environmentalist colleagues" framing. NEI knows how well this storyline appeals to reporters. It's been wildly successful in presenting NEI consultants Patrick Moore and Christine Todd Whitman as environmentalists who just happen to support nuclear power, and the NEI-funded and Hill & Knowlton-organized Clean and Safe Energy Coalition as "a large grassroots coalition that unites unlikely allies." (To its credit, the *Journal-Sentinel* described Moore, who also addressed the joint committee hearing, as the head of "an energy coalition funded by the Nuclear Energy Institute.")

Jablonski registered as an NEI lobbyist in February 2009, but previously supported nuclear power. At a March 2008 conference in Madison, Jablonski gave a talk titled, "Changing climate and changing understandings: Paths to new opinions on nuclear energy" (pdf). His profile for the event describes Jablonski as "formerly a member of the Sierra Club" who "recently crossed from the 'anti' to 'pro' side of the nuclear power debate." While still an "anti," Jablonski wrote in a 1995 op/ed column that "Wisconsin's low [electricity] costs were achieved largely because of laws and regulatory actions that the utilities adamantly opposed, such as the nuclear power moratorium."

"Back in the early 2000s or thereabout, I decided that it was necessary to at least think about whether nuclear should be a possibility, given the circumstances that we're facing and what the scientists have told us about climate [change]," Jablonski told me. After three years of research, "I now favor the use of nuclear energy, its expansion and its further development."



His relationship with NEI began at the March 2008 conference where Jablonski gave a pro-nuclear talk. "At that meeting, there were people from the Nuclear Energy Institute, and I hooked up with them," he explained. As an NEI lobbyist, he's met with state legislators and staffers "on both sides of the moratorium issue, to provide my perspective as an environmentalist who changed his position on nuclear."

Asked how he discloses that he's an NEI lobbyist, when speaking publicly about nuclear power, Jablonski got defensive. "The NEI stuff is public record," he said, referring to Wisconsin's online registry of lobbying records. Although he describes himself as "an environmentalist who changed his position on nuclear," Jablonski speculated that "the reason that people focus on that environmental angle is because that's what makes it more

experience
Anonymous
Apr 3 2009 - 12:10pm

amen!
Anonymous
Apr 3 2009 - 11:37am

Come come, ye saints...
Mutternich
Apr 3 2009 - 9:35am

Nichols appeal to MoveOn to oppose Afghanistan war, 3/3/09
John Stauber
Apr 3 2009 - 5:16am

Laura Flanders weighs in...
John Stauber
Apr 3 2009 - 4:55am

CAP Hangs with the Neoccons
John Stauber
Apr 2 2009 - 5:44pm

The System is not in crisis--the System IS the crisis.
Anonymous
Apr 2 2009 - 3:47pm

If the Aflac duck ever gets laid off...
Mutternich
Apr 2 2009 - 1:59pm

arresting or interesting." With regards to the recent legislative hearing, Jablonski said, "When I did my testimony, it was invited. ... Did they mention that I was with NEI, in their list of stuff? I didn't even look."

What about his 1995 contention that Wisconsin's moratorium on new nuclear plants helps keep state electricity costs low? Jablonski says that's no longer true, because "the cost overruns that nuclear facilities experienced in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when things went to hell for the business" are a thing of the past. That may be news to Finland, where work on a major nuclear reactor is more than three years behind schedule and billions of dollars over budget, leading to legal disputes.

"We're not lobbyists"

Yet Jablonski's and his colleagues' lobbying is only one facet of NEI's efforts to change Wisconsin's law. Patrick Moore has visited the state at least twice, in the past four months. While in Madison for a November 2008 energy conference, Moore told me that the state's moratorium is "a bit too stringent and restrictive. ... I really do think it needs to be reworded, so that what we have is a requirement that the used nuclear fuel is safely and securely managed into the future." That can be achieved, he argued, by storing waste at nuclear plant sites for up to 300 years or until it can be reprocessed – or, as Moore called it, "recycled" – and again used to fuel reactors.

Moore also met with local media, resulting in two anti-moratorium editorials from the *Wisconsin State Journal* in less than a week. "It should already be clear to lawmakers that the state can no longer afford to rule out the construction of nuclear power plants in Wisconsin," began the first column. The editorial went on to praise Moore, who it simply identified as an "environmental policy consultant."



Patrick Moore

Moore must have been pleased. "I don't think it's a problem" when media outlets don't disclose his paid work for NEI, Moore told me. "Really what matters is that my support for nuclear energy is communicated." (Moore also told me he supports developing Alberta's tar sands, a particularly dirty source of oil, but that the extraction should be powered by "small nuclear plants" instead of natural gas, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.)

In late February, NEI sent another branch of its PR arsenal to Milwaukee and Madison. Clean Energy America is "a group of nuclear energy experts who volunteer their time to raise awareness about the benefits of nuclear energy as a clean, reliable and affordable source of energy," according to its website. The site discloses that Clean Energy America is an NEI program. However, describing its participants as "volunteers" is a bit of a stretch. As Clean Energy America's Darren Gale and John Williams explained to me, they're paid for the time they give to the program by their employers, while travel, lodging and other expenses are covered by their employers or NEI.

Like Moore's and Whitman's Clean and Safe Energy Coalition, Clean Energy America is funded by NEI and coordinated by a public relations firm. In Clean Energy America's case, the firm is Smith & Harroff. The Virginia-based firm has long worked for the nuclear power industry. In the 1980s, it set up a "nuclear industry speakers bureau" for Westinghouse, which later became NEI's "Energy America Program." The PR firm's website describes that program as "'truth squads' of scientists and engineers ... trained by Smith & Harroff to work with the media, then dispatched all over the country." Darren Gale drew a direct line from that earlier effort to Clean Energy America. "They did this twenty-five years ago," he told me. "So this is really the second time that the industry has set up a speakers program like this."

Clean Energy America speakers visited six states in the program's first six months, including Florida, Texas, Georgia and North Carolina. "The timing [of the visits] is usually associated with issues that a state might have, or a region might have," especially in "places that are actively discussing the new plant potentials," according to Gale. "The timing with Wisconsin is really around the moratorium," he said, but "please don't confuse us with lobbyists." Williams added, "When an issue [about nuclear power] pops up in the news, we like to be there to provide answers to questions." During their Wisconsin visit, Williams and Gale went on talk radio shows, met with the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* and spoke on the UW-Madison campus.

Wisconsin as stepping stone?

Legislative attempts to repeal Wisconsin's moratorium on new nuclear plants in 2003, 2005

and 2007 all failed, but the political ground on the issue has shifted. Last year, Governor Jim Doyle's Task Force on Global Warming came out in support of modifying the law. Their proposed changes would allow new nuclear power plants, if they meet "Wisconsin needs at a cost that is reasonable and advantageous to customers in comparison to alternatives," considering the benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and the nuclear waste plan is "economic, reasonable, stringent, and in the public interest" (pdf).

A bill to implement the task force's recommendations, including the changes to the moratorium language, is currently being drafted. Since it will be part of a package supporting energy efficiency and renewables, and isn't an outright repeal, it's likely to enjoy wider support than the earlier bills.

There are also new players lobbying to repeal or amend Wisconsin's moratorium. Not only will NEI be actively involved for the first time, but a new industry coalition called "Clean, Responsible Energy for Wisconsin's Economy" recently formed to lobby in support of the task force's recommendations. Its members include Alliant Energy, the Wisconsin Energy Corporation and Xcel Energy. Then there are the usual suspects who lobbied in support of the previous moratorium repeal bills, such as Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, the Wisconsin Industrial Energy Group and labor unions representing electrical and construction workers.

NEI may see Wisconsin as its best chance to finally get rid of a state moratorium. Madison-based NEI lobbyist Frank Jablonski speculated that the industry group may be focusing here because "the politics are more polarized in California," while the Wisconsin legislature has "a number of either open-minded or pro-nuclear Democrats." Moreover, NEI considers Wisconsin a "favorable" state, because it has "legislation in place that helps secure financing." However, its annual Wall Street briefing, delivered on February 12, 2009, did not place any potential new nuclear plants in the state (pdf, page 17).

If Wisconsin amends or repeals its moratorium, it may help the nuclear industry convince other states to relax their restrictions, whether or not new nuclear plants are built here. But first, the people of Wisconsin will have their say, and the debate may be more contentious than NEI anticipates.

Diane Farsetta is the Center for Media and Democracy's senior researcher.

Many of the links in the above article are to articles on SourceWatch, the Center for Media and Democracy's collaborative online encyclopedia (which has special sections on climate change and nuclear issues). You can help update, expand and improve these or any of the other SourceWatch profiles of people, issues and groups shaping the public agenda. It's free to sign up, and we'd love to have you join us.

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Minnesota bill voted down in committee

The bill to lift Minnesota's ban on new nuclear plants was voted down by its House energy committee on March 26. The Associated Press reports:

While the measure still could be brought up as an amendment on the House floor, similar votes in recent years have failed. And as legislative deadlines approach, the Senate version of the bill hasn't yet been scheduled for a committee vote.

[reply](#)

Submitted by Diane Farsetta on March 31, 2009 - 2:39pm

Minnesota Senate votes to repeal ban
From the Minneapolis / St. Paul *Star Tribune*:

The Senate voted 42-24 on Thursday to repeal the state moratorium on any new nuclear plants passed in 1994. The action came after 40 minutes of discussion on an amendment to an energy bill. ...

No utility is planning to build a nuclear plant in Minnesota, but Sen. Amy Koch, R-Buffalo, said that's because the 15-year-old ban has inhibited any plans.

reply
Submitted by Diane Farsetta on April 3, 2009 - 1:28pm

More information for your nuclear article.

Frank Jablonski here. Neither of the presentations that I have made to advocate nuclear energy - - a grand total of two, one in 2008 and the recent one in 2009 - - were underwritten by NEI.

My recent presentation before Wisconsin legislative committees was an unpaid volunteer effort. I prepared the presentation, drove my car up to Two Rivers, paid for my own mileage and cup of tea, and took an unpaid day away from the office to do it. Under Wisconsin's lobbying laws, this unpaid work may nonetheless have to be "allocated" to NEI - - it seems that once you register to lobby for someone on something, everything you do on that subject that involves the legislature is presumed be on behalf of that someone. The presentation was, however, my effort, made on my dime and my time, about something I believe in. Much of my nuclear work is that way.

NEI did not even see the presentation until I gave it before the committee.

NEI has, fairly recently, started to under-write some of my pro-nuclear work. I bill them for what I classify as "core" lobbying work, specifically conversations with legislators, or their staff in legislative offices, and related research, preparation and coordination. Talking to people like you and writing clarification pieces like this, for example, are not part of it.

For the work that I do for NEI, I bill at a reduced rate, because I see nuclear energy advocacy as public interest work. In this aspect, my work with NEI is indistinguishable from arrangements that have facilitated other public interest work I have been privileged to do for environmental and renewable energy advocacy organizations.

Your article implies NEI is exploiting my environmental credentials to change public attitudes on nuclear energy. If this is the case, NEI would simply be reproducing an approach used by anti-nuclear organizations, such as UCS, which touts David Lochbaum's past association with the nuclear industry to lend credibility to its criticisms. Is such a tactic legitimate on one side of the debate but not the other?

But, about those public attitudes . . . independent polling shows the public already supports nuclear energy.
(<http://www.gallup.com/poll/117025/Support-Nuclear-Energy-Inches-New-High.aspx>)

In addition, there is a trend of environmentalists changing their perspective on nuclear energy, and feeling compelled to speak out about it. Several prominent environmentalists in the United Kingdom, for example, recently "switched." (<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/features/article2265768.ece>)

One of them is another former leader in Greenpeace. I would guess these individuals probably also have strong feelings about the need for public interest regulation of the industry, further technological development of even better nuclear reactor designs and other factors

that were discussed in your interview of me, but that did not make it into your article.

I initiated my reconsideration of nuclear energy because I wanted to think it through as an option in light of the climate crisis. Once I got deep into the reconsideration, hundreds of hours. I realized that a number of my held beliefs were wrong. If people want to challenge themselves to think carefully, with numbers, about the bracing energy and environmental issues we face, and how various strategies might work or fall short in the real world where change has to happen, I recommend this free e-book (<http://www.withouthotair.com/>). The book is not pro-nuclear, but it is pro-numbers. If they want to see a considered pro-nuclear perspective, I recommend Rod Adams' blog (<http://atomicinsights.blogspot.com/>) as one good starting point.

Think. Change. Act.

reply

Submitted by Anonymous on March 31, 2009 - 6:20am.

Diane, Very good article.

Diane,

Very good article. Unfortunately, we in California are becoming a Colonial power; not only do we have terminal NIMBYism, we are dictating to our neighbor states the nature of their power mix they can sell into California. What nonsense.

As the last 25 years have demonstrated, nuclear power does not need a "federally licensed facility" for nuclear waste disposal to deliver energy, although site storage is not an ideal outcome. Also, as a rate payer providing resources for one, the Federal Government has defaulted on its responsibility.

One should ask why there is not a similar storage requirement for other energy producers? After all, every other fossil energy source is putting radiation into the environment (plus a lot of other infinite half-life toxic material).

I also gaze at the Altamont wind farm from my office. Don't be on the operating table most days when the wind is not blowing. And the 24/7 backup for wind and solar is???? Ah, inconvenient questions.....

reply

Submitted by Anonymous on March 29, 2009 - 7:18pm.

"And the 24/7 backup for

"And the 24/7 backup for wind and solar is???? "

Batteries.

reply

Submitted by Anonymous on March 31, 2009 - 11:12am

Have you seen any 5 MW batteries?

There are wind turbines being built today that produce as much as 5 MW of electricity when the wind is blowing just right. Unfortunately, that does not happen very often and sometimes the wind does not blow at all.

The energy density for storage batteries ranges from about 41 Watt-hours/kilogram (for reliable old lead acid technology) to about 130 Watt-hours/kilogram for lithium-ion batteries. To back up just one 5 MW wind turbine for one hour, you need between 40 - 121 tons worth of batteries.

Batteries also have limited duty cycles - if you are able to achieve 300 charge-discharge cycles without a substantial

reduction in capacity you are doing very well. In service as back-up for wind or solar, you would be using up that number of cycles every year (remember, the sun has a rather predictable habit of setting every single day of a 365 day year.)

Use numbers and logic and you will see why there are very few solar and wind systems being built with battery back up. Instead, they depend on "the grid" with its mix of coal, natural gas, atomic fission and hydro as the backup.

reply

Submitted by Anonymous on April 1, 2009 - 11:33am

About that grid...

"Instead, they depend on 'the grid' with its mix of coal, natural gas, atomic fission and hydro as the backup."

You left out wood, for regions where it's practical. Wood stores less energy than coal or oil or uranium of course, but it's renewable, and the very process of renewing it removes from the air the CO2 that burning it produced.

As for the problems of storing the energy from wind and solar power, we'd have been closer to solving them by now if we'd started in sooner. All the objections to renewable energy sources that anyone can raise are no reason not to do whatever we can right now.

reply

Submitted by Mutternich on April 2, 2009 - 8:39am

Cost overruns are the norm...

I'm sure you're also aware of the nuclear industry's new approach to reactor decommissioning as well - set up a dummy corporation with government approval and transfer ownership and liability to that "independent corporation". It's only possible because the nuclear energy commission is loaded with industry insiders, just as with the FDA and the DOE.

Let's take Exelon and their nuclear decommissioning spinoff, EnergySolutions Inc.

Breaking news as of Mar 24 2009:

"An investigation on behalf of current investors in EnergySolutions, Inc (NYSE: ES) over possible breaches of fiduciary duty by the board of directors announced."

<http://www.pr-inside.com/energysolutions-inc-investor-investigation-r1137251.htm>

The story begins back in 2007 when Exelon, the large midwestern coal-and-nuclear utility, set up a deal with a Utah-based company, EnergySolutions Inc. to decommission its Zion reactor. The key factor was that ownership of the plant was to be transferred, making EnergySolutions responsible for all costs.

"EnergySolutions has secured additional financial assurance for the unlikely event that the cost exceeds that amount. Conversely, any funds remaining in the trust fund after decommissioning is completed would be returned to ComEd's ratepayers in accordance with a 2000 agreement with the state."

Exelon is trying to claim that this is an example of environmental stewardship, but it in reality what they've done is transferred their liability to a tiny company that is likely to fail, leaving taxpayers and ratepayers stuck with the cleanup bill - because you can bet that Exelon's shareholders don't want to pay it. Similar issues are going on

with Exelon and Three Mile Island, where the ownership is also being shuffled around prior to decommissioning.

Obviously, Exelon and the other nuclear operators view aging nuclear reactors as "toxic assets" that they want to get off their balance sheets - who knows, maybe they'll end up selling them to the taxpayer with government assistance, just as finance is doing today.

Exelon's future plans all revolve around expansion of coal and nuclear, with no plans for solar or wind expansion. Their major shareholders are British and U.S. commercial-investment banks (Barclays, State Street, Vanguard, Fidelity), and they were also the biggest lifetime supporter of Barak Obama before Goldman Sachs, the University of California, JP Morgan, Harvard, Citigroup, Microsoft and Google passed them up.

They've latched on to the PR theme of "clean energy", repeated in every forum, as well as in the Presidential speeches. That's the coordinated response of the coal, tar sands and nuclear industries - relabel themselves as "clean". Notice how Obama refused to say "dirty tar sands" while in Canada?

Solar, wind and biofuels are the only real renewable energy sources (plus various hydro/geothermal strategies, which are not very productive) - uranium is an exhaustible resource.

The advantages of wind, solar and biofuel-based economy over one built on nuclear, coal and petroleum are many:

- 1) No fossil CO2 emissions, meaning no change in atmospheric CO2.
- 2) With wind and solar, there is no need for cooling water, saving large quantities of water for farm irrigation and other uses (important in the arid West).
- 3) Nuclear power plants can cause Chernobyls, and are susceptible to attack and sabotage - if the planes had flown into the Hudson river reactors, the whole region would still be highly radioactive. Nuclear power plants are also a source of plutonium for nuclear weapon production.
- 4) Nuclear power is ridiculously expensive - that's why investors won't put money in to plants without huge loan guarantees from the federal government. They also require laws that limit their accident liability - the Price-Anderson act.
- 5) Waste disposal and decommissioning costs are proving to be much greater than ever estimated in the past (no surprises there), and if those costs were honestly included in the up-front price of a nuclear power plant, you'd never see another one built.
- 6) We currently get 20% of our electricity from nuclear, and we can easily get another 25% from solar, and another 25% from wind - thus, we should be able to entirely replace coal with wind and solar while maintaining nuclear electricity production at current levels, and gradually phasing it out as reactors are decommissioned and more renewable energy is brought online.

That will have to be done anyway; the world only has a 30-year supply of uranium at current consumption rates, and uranium prices have increased 10-fold in the past few years.

reply

Submitted by Anonymous on March 28, 2009 - 9:49am.

Sometimes I wish I was a former "anti".

Diane - first of all, thank you for a well researched and informative piece about the public relations efforts associated with one side of the nuclear fission technology debate. Perhaps sometime you will take an equally hard look at the economic arrangements on the other side of the discussion - the groups that actively oppose the use of nuclear fission power to produce electricity in competition with coal, oil and natural gas.

Though I have some acquaintances at NEI and have engaged in several discussions with them over the years, no one has ever offered to hire my services - perhaps because they realize that my opinions and public information efforts are not for sale. Perhaps it is just because my "story" is not a man bites dog story of a former anti-nuclear activist turned cautious supporter. I have been a fission fan since I was a young child and my father showed me the difference between an atomic power plant the oil burning power plants that his company was gradually shutting down as the new nuclear plants at Turkey Point and St. Lucie were coming on line. (Dad was an electrical engineer for FP&L; we used to regularly attend the annual company picnic at the Cuttler plant, one of the oil burners that got shut down.)

In my professional life, I learned the details of the technology as a US naval submarine officer and eventually served as the Engineer Officer of the USS Von Steuben for a 40 month tour. Since that time, I have been writing and talking about fission to anyone who would listen - when you have lived and worked within 200 feet of an operating plant for months at a time, you learn that most of what the public knows about the technology is often misleading.

As a businessman with a habit of reading about economics and trade over time, I have also learned that there are enormous rewards for fighting nuclear power that are accruing in the bank accounts of the established fossil fuel interests. By restricting the availability of a formidable competitor, the individuals, companies and government bodies that are involved in the finding, exploiting, processing, transporting, and marketing of coal, oil, natural gas, wind turbines, solar panels, emissions control equipment, and emissions certificates are able to maintain their market dominance and increase the market price for their products and services. Those products and services would be significantly less valuable in a world where fission could compete on a less restricted playing field.

There are plenty of us on the web and in the blogosphere who are not lobbyists, not paid by the nuclear industry and are truly volunteers in the battle to get rid of the FUD (fear, uncertainty and doubt) that has been spread wide and deep for the past 50 years in opposition to the commercial use of atomic fission. (A good place to start if you are interested in building a list of active blogs that cover the topic is in the right column of the Atomic Insights Blog.)

We are a diverse bunch and often argue with each other about the details of one technical solution over another, but in general we agree that fission beats combustion hands down in terms of safety, reliability, security, growth potential, and overall cost to society.

Rod Adams
Publisher, Atomic Insights
Host and producer, The Atomic Show Podcast

reply
Submitted by Anonymous on March 27, 2009 - 2:33am.

Unholy alliance of clean and dirty energy interests?

"...[T]he individuals, companies and government bodies that are involved in the finding, exploiting, processing, transporting, and marketing of coal, oil, natural gas, wind turbines, solar panels, emissions control equipment, and emissions certificates are able to maintain their market dominance and increase the market price for their products and services."

Interesting, the way you mix wind turbines and solar panels in with coal, oil and natural gas. Are we to get the impression that there's no such thing as clean wind or solar power?

As for "overall cost to society"--

<http://nukefree.org/news/peoplediedatthreemileisland>

reply

Submitted by Mutternich on March 28, 2009 - 7:20am

"Stepping stone". You've got to be kidding

The need for a Federal "repository for high level nuclear waste" is a last ditch

effort by anti-nukes. I read an article called "There is no such thing as nuclear waste" and was impressed that France has no need for storing nuclearwastes - they reprocess and continue using the fuel until there isn't any radiation to speak of still left to worry about. And as for high costs, those costs can easily produce

sub 5 cents per kilowatthour power or less. Nuclear fuel costs are running at less than .4 cents per kilowatthour and the charge to ensure plenty of funding for decommissioning is less than .2 cents per kilowatthour. I notice that no one is funding the decommissioning of windmills or solar farms. Apparently those 80,000 ton blocks of base concrete will remain there forever. Wisconsin has a reputation of being fraidycats and cowards about just about everything. I hope they don't build a nuclear plant and try to use wind power. You'll get just what you deserve.

Vermont has plenty of nuclear and some hydroelectric andthey produce just 5 pounds of carbon per megawatthour of power produced. I see that filthy Wisconsin produces 1925 pounds (!!!!) of carbon dioxide per megawatthour, making it far and away one of the dirtiest emitters on the planet. India and China are far cleaner. Shame, Wisconsin. shame. And you jerks are worried about nuclear waste storage!!!!

reply

Submitted by Anonymous on March 26, 2009 - 7:33pm

France DOES have a nuclear waste problem

Yes, it is true that France reprocesses spent fuel, but you get it wrong after that -- what is left over is much denser and more dangerous than what they started with, there is just less mass to it. It poses even more of a storage problem because of that.

I was under 500 meters of clay in a laboratory near Nancy (eastern France) where they are doing experiments to justify creating a nuclear waste dump there. They are far from having the problem worked out.

reply

Submitted by Judith Slars-Poisson on April 1, 2009 - 3:18pm

No big deal.

"...what is left over is much denser and more dangerous than what they started with, there is just less mass to it. It poses even more of a storage problem because of that."

Just shred it up and put it in cigarettes. Smokers will defend to the death their right to suck it in.

Unlimited clean energy, waste disposal practically takes care of itself -- what's not to like? :-)

reply

Submitted by Mutternich on April 2, 2009 - 8:50am

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Obama's energy chief announces nuclear waste panel

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WASHINGTON (AFP) — US Energy Secretary Steven Chu backed a new generation of nuclear power Wednesday, and said a panel of experts would report back this year on the best long-term storage of radioactive waste.

The Nobel laureate scientist, chosen by President Barack Obama to lead an ambitious drive for renewable energy, said nuclear power was also an "essential part of our energy mix" along with cleaner coal and carbon capture.

Chu said he was convening a "blue-ribbon panel" of experts to "develop a long-term strategy that must include the waste disposal plan," after Obama's budget ruled out a proposed national repository at Nevada's Yucca Mountain.

"I don't want to suggest what this blue-ribbon panel might determine but let me stress this will be done this year," he told a Senate budget committee hearing on the energy proposals in Obama's 3.55-trillion-dollar budget.

Chu said nuclear power, which currently generates 20 percent of US energy, must take its place alongside clean technologies such as wind and solar to wean the United States off foreign oil and fight climate change.

He encountered criticism from Republican senators after the Obama administration stripped 50 billion dollars in loans for new nuclear power plants from a 787-billion-dollar economic stimulus plan.

Chu said federal loans worth 18.5 billion dollars were still available, while stressing that the government's Nuclear Regulatory Commission rather than the Department of Energy approves licenses for new nuclear plants.

* He said the DoE and NRC, however, are working together to offer a simpler licensing process for next-generation reactors under development by Westinghouse Electric, part of Japan's Toshiba Corp., and General Electric.

In the meantime, Chu said "I don't think the NRC should be limiting that or putting the licensing on hold" for applications for 31 nuclear plants now pending, despite the lack of a long-term national waste facility.

He said that so-called dry cask storage at individual nuclear plants, "which can be safe for decades," was sufficient for now while the panel of experts investigates the long-term options.

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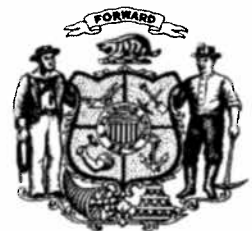
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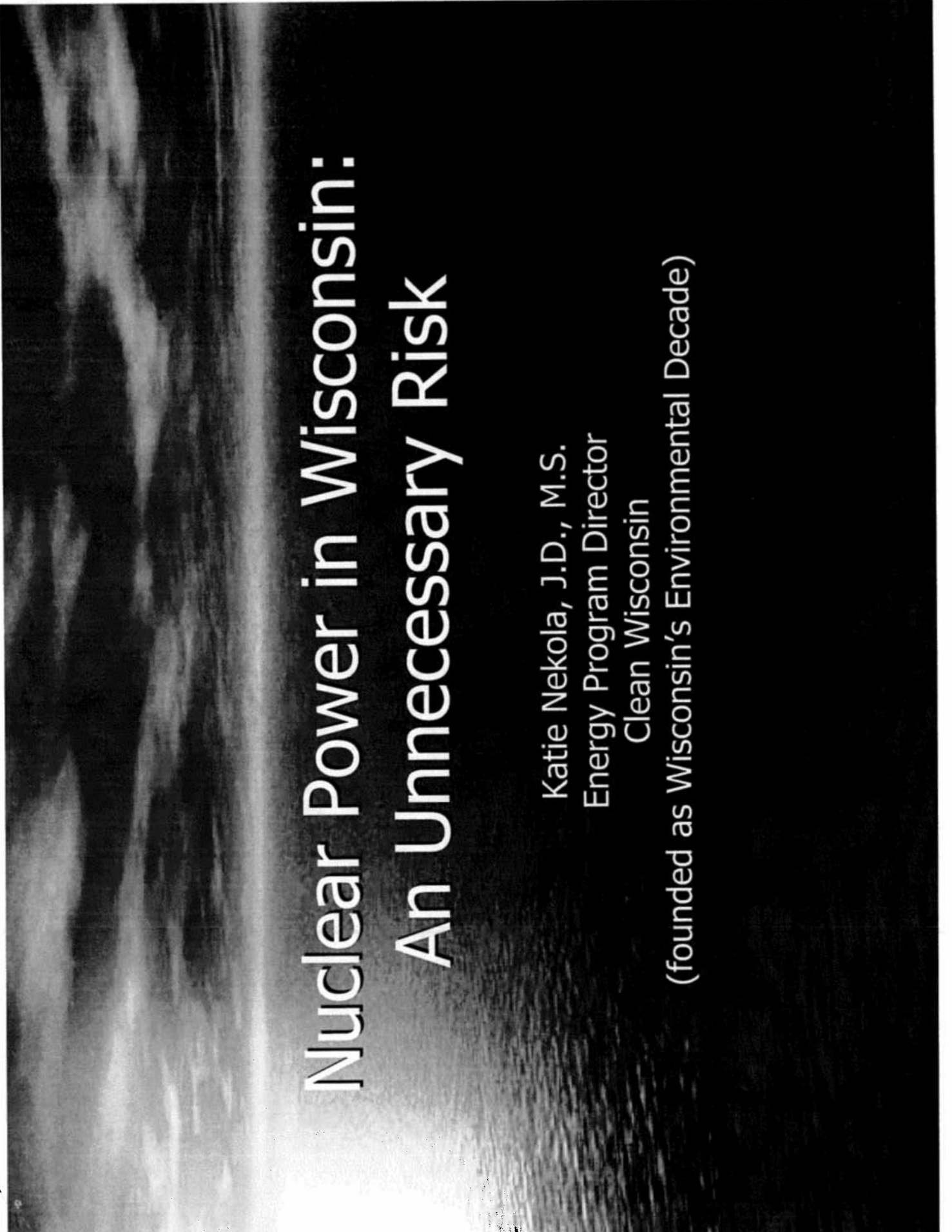
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WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





Nuclear Power in Wisconsin: An Unnecessary Risk

Katie Nekola, J.D., M.S.
Energy Program Director
Clean Wisconsin

(founded as Wisconsin's Environmental Decade)

Clean Wisconsin's Position

- Radioactive Waste Disposal is a serious problem that we cannot afford to ignore
- The risk of nuclear accident from equipment failure, terrorist attack, or human error are real, and should not be ignored or minimized.
- More nuclear power in Wisconsin is not necessary to meet our energy needs or to address global warming.

Nuclear Waste: Ignore It and It Won't Go Away

Metric Tons of Heavy Metal /High level radioactive
waste stored on site:

	Actual thru 2002	Projected thru 2011	Projected thru 2046
Kewaunee	348	451	612
LaCrosse	38	38	38
<u>Point Beach</u>	<u>652</u>	<u>876</u>	<u>1,143</u>
Totals	1,038	1,365	1,793

Sources: DOE's Energy Information Administration, DOE's Final Environmental Impact
Statement, 2002, DOE/EIS-0250F

Permanent Storage on the Shores of Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River?

- Dairyland Power's nuclear plant has not operated since 1987, yet high level waste remains on site, at an annual cost of \$6 million to its customers.
- As of March 31, 2006, Wisconsin ratepayers have paid a total of \$594.3 million into the nuclear waste fund.
- Over \$9 billion has been invested in development of Yucca Mountain over its 20-year history.

The Failed Promise of Yucca Mountain

- The federal government reneged on its contract with states to remove radioactive waste by 1998; utilities have sued the federal government for its failure to remove the waste
- The projected dates for Yucca Mountain to begin receiving waste have slipped again and again, at a cost of millions of dollars to Wisconsin ratepayers
- The Obama draft budget removes almost all funding for Yucca Mountain. A Department of Energy spokeswoman said that President Obama and Energy Secretary Chu “have been emphatic that nuclear waste storage at Yucca Mountain is not an option, period.”



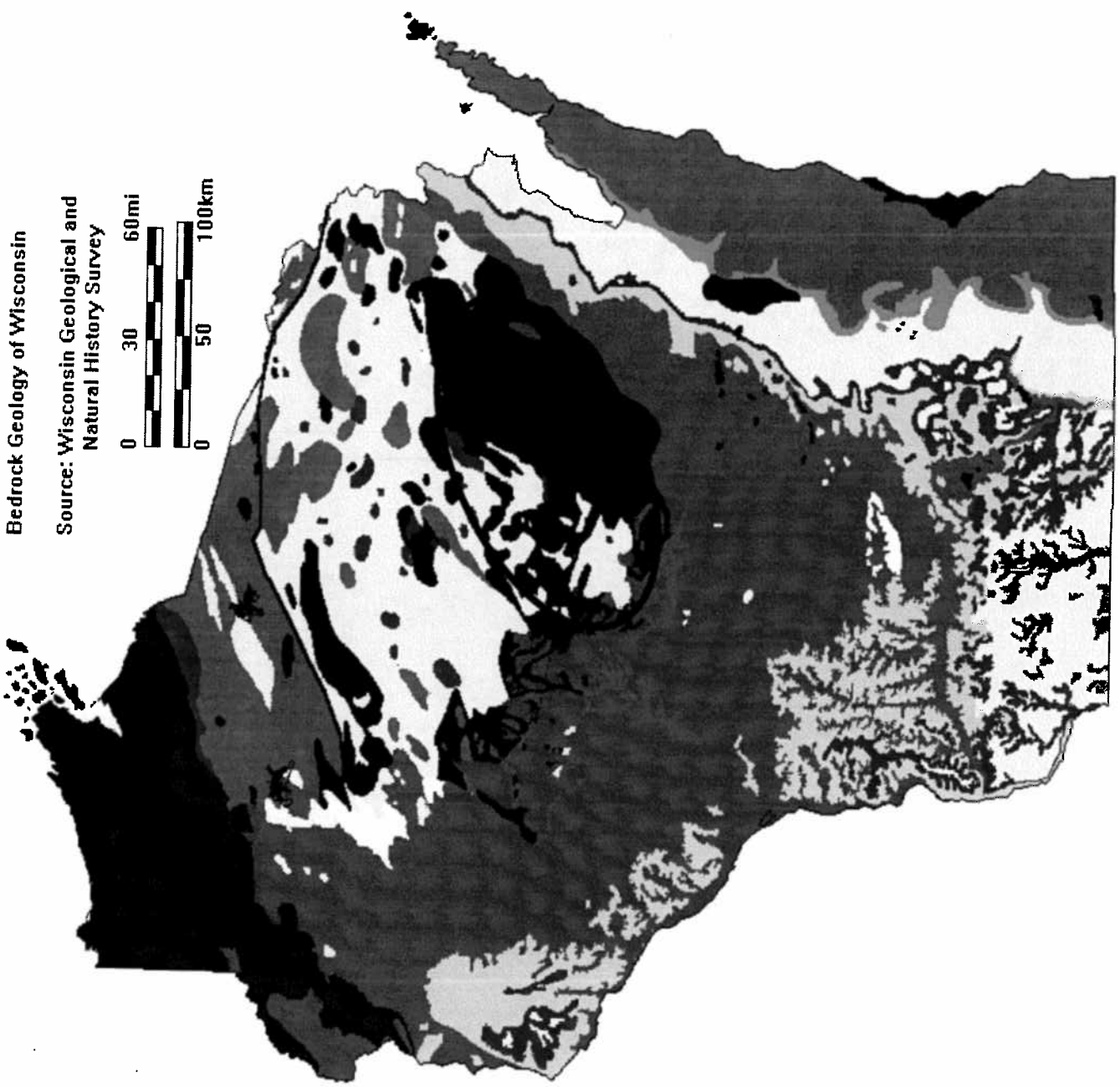
Wisconsin: The Next Yucca?

- ◆ Because of their bedrock geology, the Wolf River and Puritan batholiths in north central Wisconsin were identified as good candidates for a federal radioactive waste disposal site east of the Mississippi.
- ◆ "Once Yucca Mountain is full, new locations must be created...Alternatives considered in the original search, such as the Wolf River Batholith in Central Wisconsin, will be at the top of the list."

Wisconsin Engineer magazine, 9/04

Bedrock Geology of Wisconsin

Source: Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey



Paleozoic Sedimentary Rocks

- Devonian
- Silurian
- Ordoevician
- Maquoketa
- Sinnipee Group
- Ancell Group
- Prairie du Chien
- Cambrian



**Late Precambrian
Central North American Rift Complex
Rocks (1100 Ma - NW Region)**

- Sedimentary Rocks
- Volcanic Rocks
- Mafic Intrusive Rocks



Post-Penokean Rocks

- Wolf River Batholith (1500 Ma)
- Tigerton Anorthosite
- Baraboo Interval
- Quartzite
- Rhyolite (1700 Ma)
- Granitic Rocks (1700 Ma)



Penokean Orogen

- Granitic Rocks (1800 Ma)
- Gneiss
- Metasedimentary Rocks (1900-2000 Ma)
- Metavolcanic Rocks (1900-2000 Ma)
- Mafic Intrusive Rocks



Archean Rocks (2500+ Ma)

- Granitic Rocks
- Gneiss
- Metavolcanic Rocks



U.S. Experience with Commercial Reprocessing

West Valley, New York- The only commercial reprocessing plant ever to operate in the U.S., began operations in 1966 and shut down in 1972 because of cost.

Morris, Illinois-Built in early 1970s; after construction, technical problems prevented it from ever operating. Morris is now a major spent fuel storage site.

Barnwell, South Carolina-Construction began in 1970 but was delayed. In 1977 President Carter canceled the project due to nuclear weapons proliferation concerns. Barnwell has also become a major site for radioactive waste storage.

Cleanup and decontamination of the West Valley site is expected to take 40 years and cost over \$5 billion. Former NRC Commissioner Peter Bradford noted that the facility had an unacceptable record of worker exposures and radioactive emissions.

Source: (National Academies 1996, pp. 165-167; DOE 1996)

◆ Thirty years ago, the Wisconsin Legislature and Public Service Commission recognized that it would be irresponsible to authorize the construction of new nuclear power plants until the radioactive waste disposal problem was solved.

Ch. 196.493, Wis. Stats. (1983)

Construction of nuclear power plants limited.

(2)LIMITS ON CERTIFICATION. The Commission may not certify under s. 196.49(3)b or 196.491(3) any nuclear power plant unless the Commission finds that:

(a) A federally licensed facility, or a facility outside of the United States which the Commission determines will satisfy the public welfare requirements of the people of this state, with adequate capacity to dispose of high-level nuclear waste from all nuclear power plants operating in this state will be available, as necessary, for disposal of the waste.

■ “What tilted my decision to join my colleagues in banning new nuclear applications in Wisconsin until the federal government resolves nuclear fuel availability, waste disposal and decommissioning is two and a half decades of broken federal promises and a desire to avoid economic catastrophe if the federal government continues to promote nuclear with unnecessary siting laws, unrealistically strong endorsements and its own incredible inaction.”

■ PSCW Chair Charles Cicchetti, Advance Plan I Order, 1978

“The most fundamental environmental principle, taught to every child before their third birthday, is that you don’t make a new mess until you have cleared up the old one. It seems astonishing to me that we could contemplate building a new generation of nuclear power stations when we still have no idea where the waste from existing nukes will be buried.”

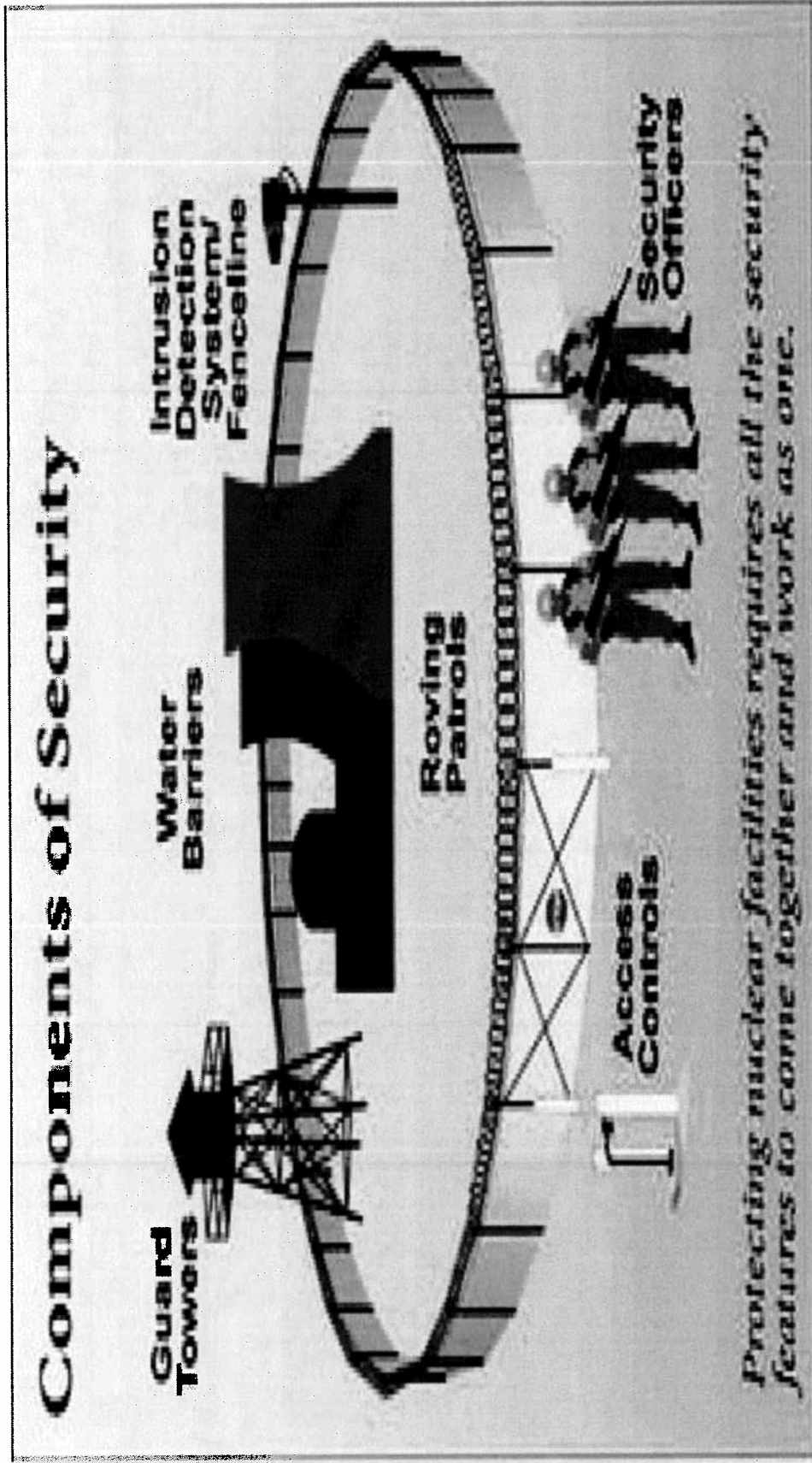
-George Monbiot, The Guardian

Radioactive Risk

- The NRC says: "It is unlikely that there will be an accident....but it is possible."
- Recognizing the risk, NRC has ordered the following safety measures:
 - Multiple barriers to withstand attacks on plants
 - Force on force drills to prepare for armed attacks
 - New plants built to withstand impact from commercial jet
 - Armed security guards
 - Emergency evacuation plans for 10-mile radius around plants
 - Ingestion Pathway Emergency Planning Zones for 50-mile radius around plants

Required Security at U.S. Nuclear Plants

(From the NRC website)



Congressional Research Service Report to Congress on Nuclear Power Plants: Vulnerability to Terrorist Attack

“Nuclear power plants have long been recognized as potential targets of terrorist attacks...a taped interview shown 9/02/02 on Arab TV...contains a statement that Al Qaeda initially planned to include a nuclear plant in its 2001 attack sites...”

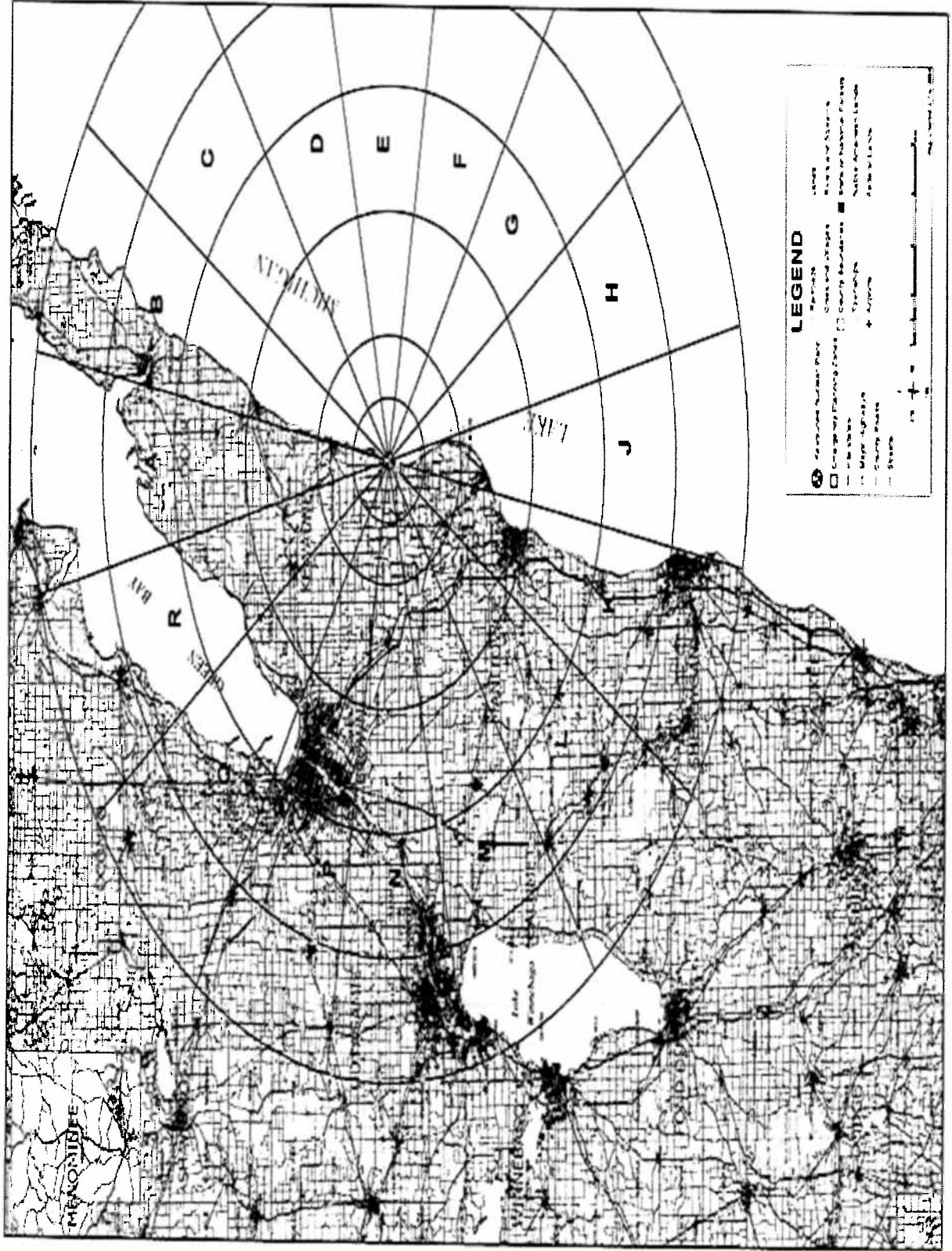
Radioactive spent fuel is located outside the reactor containment structure. A report by the National Academy of Sciences in 2005 found that “successful terrorist attacks on spent fuel pools, though difficult, are possible,” and that “if an attack leads to a propagating zirconium cladding fire, it could result in the release of large amounts of radioactive material.”

Armed Guards at Nuclear Power Plant

In "Force on Force" Drill in the Event of An Attack
(from NRC website)



KEWAUNEE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT 50-MILE INGESTION ZONE



With all of these precautions in place, why should we be concerned about plant safety?

- The NRC color codes safety violations as follows:
 - Green: Very low significance
 - White: Low to moderate significance
 - Yellow: Substantial significance
 - Red: High Significance

Of the six yellow level violations issued nationally since 2000, Kewaunee received two.

Of the five red level violations issued nationally since 2000, Point Beach received three.

- Point Beach was classified in the “Multiple Repetitive Degraded Zone” –the category just before the NRC orders plant shutdown for safety reasons.
- NRC determined that these violations (had) High Safety Significance because they would substantially reduce the operators’ capability for safely shutting down the plant in response to certain accidents.

Point Beach Notices of Violation

- 1996-\$325,000 civil penalty imposed due to **multiple violations**
- 1997-Multiple violations associated with corrective action program
- 1999-On-shift crew, operations support group, and Wepco site management team failed to acknowledge validity of temperature alarm and appreciate significance of low temperature readings
- 2002-Failure to promptly identify and correct significant condition.
- 2002-Failure to identify and correct potential for failure of auxiliary feedwater pumps during accident scenarios.
- 2003-Failure to implement corrective action for previously cited violation
- 2004-\$60,000 civil penalty for changing Emergency Action Level scheme that reduced the effectiveness of the Emergency Plan without receiving NRC approval.
- 2005-\$60,000 civil penalty for failure to provide accurate information to NRC regarding Emergency Preparedness Drill.
- 2005-Failure to self-identify untimely declaration of an Alert classification during emergency preparedness drill.
- 2007-Settlement agreement between Nuclear Management Company and NRC.
- 2007-Performance deficiency
- Emergency Preparedness Civil Penalty: \$60,000 paid Jan. 2006 for an instance where two plant staff deliberately provided inaccurate information to the NRC about an emergency preparedness drill.

Kewaunee Notices of Violation

- 1997-two NOVs, \$50,000 civil penalty
- 1999-failure to ensure full implementation of NRC-approved security manual and falsification of security-related records
- 2001-Violation of NRC requirements for emergency response staffing drills, failure to correct deficiencies.
- 2002-Failure to provide adequate fire protection
- 2003-Failure to ensure that employees with unescorted access to Plant are fit for duty
- 2005-Inability to rapidly close containment equipment hatch during cold shutdown conditions
- 2005-Failure to verify and check adequacy of auxiliary feedwater system to operate during tornados and seismic events.
- 2005-Failure to ensure system safety in event of flooding or excessive steam releases
- 2007-Failure to report fuel leak, resulting in failure to evaluate and repair leak until two months later
- 2008-Failure to report deficiencies in emergency plan which could have delayed state and local emergency response measures.

- “The abiding lesson that Three Mile Island taught Wall Street was that a group of NRC-licensed reactor operators, as good as any others, could turn a \$2 billion asset into a \$1 billion cleanup job in about 90 minutes.”
 - Peter Bradford, former commissioner of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

An Unnecessary Risk

- ◆ There are safer ways to meet our energy needs that don't generate radioactive waste that stays toxic for thousands of years. Our first priority should be maximizing energy efficiency and conservation to reduce demand for electricity, as other states have done successfully, and developing Wisconsin's own renewable resources to create jobs and energy independence.

“Nuclear Power is a distraction”

- Tia Nelson, co-chair of the Governor’s Task Force on Global Warming, said “I don’t believe nuclear plants are a near-term option. We should be pursuing the low-hanging fruit at this point, and that is conservation and energy efficiency. Right now, nuclear is a distraction.”

