



PRESS RELEASE

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for immediate release: Friday, February 13, 2009

GROUPS UNITE TO OPPOSE NUCLEAR ENERGY IN KENTUCKY, URGE LEGISLATORS TO PURSUE CLEAN, SAFE ENERGY

Nuclear energy is expensive, risky and unnecessary given cleaner energy solutions, said representatives from five Kentucky environmental organizations today, who demanded that Kentucky lawmakers reject nuclear energy for our state. The groups came together to speak out against proposed legislation in the Kentucky House and Senate that would clear the way for nuclear energy projects.

Since 1984, Kentucky has had in place a law that prevents construction of nuclear power plants until the federal government has a plan to safely dispose of high-level nuclear waste. However, Senate Bill 13 and House Bill 376, now moving through the Kentucky legislature, would rescind that law and allow consideration of nuclear energy.

“Kentuckians are in desperate need of energy solutions that are cost-effective, safe and won’t harm our health or the environment,” said Elizabeth Crowe, Director of the Kentucky Environmental Foundation. “Nuclear energy is none of these things. Our legislators are pursuing nuclear energy despite all of the problems it creates, while ignoring better options. We are here to urge them to act in the best interest of Kentucky citizens, not the nuclear industry.”

Speakers at the press event today highlighted myriad problems with nuclear energy. Rick Clewett, Co-Chair of the Kentucky Sierra Club Legislative Committee said nuclear energy could be rejected on financial costs alone, citing recent estimates from Florida Power and Light that a nuclear plant would cost \$8,000 per kilowatt of capacity – an unreasonably large amount. Moreover, he said, a recent Moody’s study reports that it is impossible to know how much nuclear plants being planned now will cost in the end.

Thus, compared to the high costs of nuclear energy, energy efficiency is a much better deal for Kentucky, Clewett said. “Implementation of efficiency programs should be our first priority in meeting Kentuckians’ energy needs. Not only is energy efficiency the most cost-effective choice

for government and utilities, but it immediately lowers customers' bills at a time many of us really need help," he said.

Mary Davis with EcoPerspectives focused on the security risks from nuclear energy. "Most of us remember the catastrophes at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl. States all over the country have been embroiled in debate over how to transport and dispose of radioactive waste because there appears to be no safe way to do it. Do we really want to open ourselves up to those kinds of risks here in Kentucky?" she said. "We don't want a nuclear infrastructure. We want infrastructure for clean renewable energy like for solar, wind and hydro power."

Andy McDonald from the Kentucky Solar Partnership echoed Davis' comments, saying "We have an abundance of safe, clean energy sources available, in the form of energy efficiency, conservation, and renewable resources, which can meet our energy needs at a fraction of the cost of nuclear power. Nuclear energy is an unconscionable choice for Kentucky."

Numerous other Kentucky organizations such as the League of Women Voters, Kentucky Resource Council and Kentuckians for the Commonwealth are also opposed to the nuclear energy bills.

Jack Wilson, Vice-President of the Kentucky Conservation Committee, concluded the press conference by recalling Kentucky's experience with a nuclear waste disposal site at Maxey Flats in Fleming County. The dump started leaking in the 1970s and Kentucky has been paying ever since. Wilson commented, "This experience should be sufficient to contemplate where we want to go in the future. Nuclear energy offers no solution to Kentuckians. The most viable source of energy and the one that will create the most green jobs for Kentuckians is energy conservation."

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Copies of speakers' statements are available upon request from the Kentucky Environmental Foundation at (859) 986-0868 or by email at elizabeth@cwwg.org.