



News release

For Immediate release – October 29, 2008

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Nuclear Nightmares Could Haunt Texas Clean Energy Could Save Texas From Wasting Billions

Austin - Texas consumer and environmental organizations held a news conference today to expose seven monstrous nuclear nightmares, all reasons to oppose the construction of more nuclear reactors in Texas. The press conference was held outside of two buildings near the Capitol that the activists called “nuclear catacombs” since they contain the offices of three companies trying to build six nuclear reactors in Texas, Luminant, Exelon and NRG. Two additional reactors are proposed by Amarillo Power, bringing the total to eight commercial reactors planned for Texas.

“Nuclear nightmares could haunt Texas forever if the nuclear energy dragon prevails”, said Karen Hadden, Director of the Sustainable Energy and Economic Development (SEED) Coalition. “These nuclear nightmares include economic disaster, sleeping security guards, massive water consumption and contamination risks, radioactive leaks, radioactive waste, routine radionuclide emissions, and terrorism risks, and accidents or meltdown. Nightmare enough?”

- **Economic disaster** could result from the high cost of building new reactors. Nuclear reactors will eat billions of dollars each year that could be used to feed less expensive and less polluting renewable energy and energy efficiency programs. Without being fed a vast diet of federal and state government subsidies these plants would never be built. The estimated cost of the proposed South Texas reactors have already more than doubled since they were announced. If they are built they will provide power that is far most costly than alternatives. The Exelon reactors could run up to \$22 billion, before cost overruns.
- **Most people laugh at the idea of Homer Simpson running a nuke, but guards have been caught and televised while sleeping on the job at Exelon’s nuclear reactors.** Human error and mistakes are the most likely cause of a catastrophic reactor failure. Being asleep can’t help.
- **Call Joe the Plumber- we’ve sprung a leak.** Leaks from Exelon’s Braidwood, Dresden and Byron led to tritium-contaminated water in Illinois. **Don’t Nuke the Guadalupe.** Proposed nuclear reactors could suck the Guadalupe and the Colorado rivers almost dry, since they use vast amounts of water. More than 75,000 acre/feet of water could be consumed every year by Exelon’s proposed reactors.

- **Radioactive waste lasts over a million years .** Low-level radioactive waste could be hot for hundreds of thousand to over a million years. Texas' waste disposal plan calls for a private company to manage a low-level dump, but the company would only be licensed to operate it for 15 years. The company could then renew its license or decide that it has profited enough, close the dump and walk away, leaving the mess to the state of Texas. This is also true if the company just folds up and vanishes into the night.
- **What about terrorist attack?** Security at the South Texas nuclear site has failed basic tests. Proposed nuclear plants don't have to be hardened to withstand a jetliner hitting them. Has the NRC have forgotten about 9-11?
- **Whoops... it's just a little hole.** A crack in one South Texas reactor led to the escape of a small amount of radioactive material from the reactor vessel. The Davis Besse Nuclear Reactor in Ohio developed a hole in the reactor vessel that was six inches deep and seven inches wide. This hole could have led to a serious accident if coolant water was lost. Nuclear plants are permitted to vent radioactive gasses as much as 22 times each year. Radioactive emissions cause cancer.
- **Accidents happen and nuclear accidents are forever. We don't need to learn the hard way.**

Appearing in a skit as Mr. Burns (of The Simpsons) Reed said, “What good is money if it can't inspire terror in your fellow man? New taxpayer-subsidized nuclear plants in Texas will allow me to make money and inspire terror!”

“Citizens can halt the money hungry Nuclear Energy Dragon in its tracks by standing up and saying no to nukes and yes to efficiency and renewable solar and wind power. Texas doesn't need these energy needs,” said Cyrus Reed, in his usual role as Conservation Program Director with Lone Star Sierra Club.

“Physicians for Social Responsibility started off as an organization in the 1960's to help prevent nuclear war. PSR feels that not only will the proliferation of nuclear power plants increase the risk of nuclear terrorism, but will be a major source of pollution, both radioactive as well as non-nuclear, that will adversely affect us all,” said Dr. Elliot Trester, a board member of Austin Physicians for Social Responsibility. “In the spirit of today's news conference, we find the attempt to build new nuclear reactors in Texas to be as scary as the Texas Chain Saw massacre.”

“There is still time for you to energize your members of Congress and the Texas legislature . Ask them to wave their pens and create new programs to harness the power of the sun for the citizens of Texas. Efficiency can cut our energy needs for a quarter of the cost of building a nuke” said Tom “Smitty” Smith, Director of Public Citizen's Texas office. “Even new solar power plants with storage are cheaper than the anticipated costs of nukes. Which energy future do you want- high cost and high risk or lower cost, safer energy?”

“The only people who love the money devouring nuclear energy dragon are utility folks from these Congress Avenue catacombs who seek to profit from building expensive nuclear reactors. They plan to charge you more and more for the power they produce! Stop them before they breed again!” said Tom “Smitty” Smith.

“Spending billions of dollars in subsidies for nuclear power threatens our ability to put in place the energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions that exist today and can be implemented now. We can't wait to reduce global warming gases. New studies by the UK Hadley Center find that we must take action in the next two years and not wait a decade or more. Nuclear power can't solve the global warming crisis,” said Smith.

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