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CALIFORNIA NUCLEAR REVIVAL DIES IN COMMITTEE: Bill to lift 30-year state ban defeated

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SACRAMENTO, Calif. - Today, a controversial bill that would have allowed the construction of nuclear power plants to resume in California died in committee before reaching the floor of the State Assembly.

AB 719 (Devore) would have struck down California's 1976 Nuclear Safeguards Act, a moratorium on building nuclear power plants until a permanent solution to the storage of high-level radioactive waste is developed. The Assembly's Natural Resources Committee, chaired by Assemblywoman Loni Hancock, voted - 4 to 2 to uphold the ban. Several members who expressed concern about lifting the ban were not there when the vote was counted as they had conflicting bills in other Committees.

The California legislature enacted the Nuclear Safeguards legislation to prohibit new plant construction because of the federal government's failure to create a central nuclear waste repository. Thirty-one years later, no such solution exists and approximately 75,000 tons of radioactive byproducts of nuclear power generation have accumulated and are stored adjacent to the nation's rivers, lakes and oceans awaiting disposal.

According to the Resources Committee's analysis of the Devore bill, "the federal waste disposal program has been plagued with technical and legal challenges, managerial problems, licensing delays, persistent weaknesses in quality assurance for the program, and increasing costs."

The Devore bill claimed to address the need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to curb global warming. According to the California Energy Commission, the most significant reductions in CO2 emissions from electricity generation can be achieved through energy efficiency programs and integrating renewable energy resources — solar, wind, thermal, biomass and hydropower— into electricity supplies.

"The so-called nuclear renaissance and the idea the nuclear power is the way to combat climate change is based on a tall stack of fallacies, unsupported by past experience or future promises," said Rochelle Becker, Executive Director of the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility, which spearheaded opposition to the Devore bill. "Just because nuclear power proponents call their technology green, doesn't make it so."

"The Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility welcomes every opportunity to discuss issues of nuclear power and waste versus solutions to global warming that focus on efficiency and renewable energy with Assemblyman Devore and all members of our state legislature. We anticipate the results of an upcoming study by the California Energy Commission that will analyze the costs, benefits and risks of continuing down a nuclear energy path will lead us to a clearer understanding of where to invest our energy dollars," Becker said.

Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility is an educational and advocacy organization that works with other environmental and policy groups to stop nuclear power development and relicensing of aging nuclear facilities in California and promote create clean, renewable and economic energy sources that will create jobs, provide energy independence and serve as a model for other states and countries.

For more information, see: www.a4nr.org