

Greens oppose national and Wisconsin efforts to build new nuclear reactors

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Green Party leaders are urging the Senate to reject the McCain-Lieberman Climate Stewardship Act, calling the bill an effort to subsidize nuclear energy as a way to combat global warming.

The bill repeats earlier failed legislation that would combine mandatory caps on carbon dioxide emissions with a credit-trading system modeled after the Clean Air Act, and adds incentives for nuclear development (\$6.1 billion in the recently passed House version; \$4.3 billion in the Senate bill).

Greens have called market-based solutions to global warming severely inadequate and warn that the dangers of nuclear power are insurmountable.

“We do not see nuclear power as any kind of solution for our current energy crisis,” said Jill Bussiere, Co-chair of the Wisconsin Green Party. “We are working to maintain the current common-sense public interest Wisconsin statutes.”

In 2003-2004, there was robust opposition to a bill that would have made it easier to construct new nuclear power plants within Wisconsin. It is expected that a similar bill will be introduced to the Wisconsin legislature in the near future.

At its meeting at the Midwest Renewable Energy Fair in Custer on Sunday, June 19th, 2005, the Coordinating Counsel of the Wisconsin Green Party endorsed the current effort of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Physicians for Social Responsibility to maintain the current Wisconsin conditions for the building of new nuclear reactors. The effort includes a petition drive (see petition text below).

“There are national and state efforts afoot to increase our already dangerous and short-sighted reliance upon nuclear energy,” said Bussiere. “There are better and more cost-effective solutions to global warming and our energy crisis than nuclear power.”

“Democrats and Republicans have turned the need for sound energy policy into a choice between suffering the effects of catastrophic climate change and the massive accumulation of deadly radioactive waste from nuclear power,” said Jody Grage Haug, co-chair of the Green Party of the United States. “The only rational response to the threat of global warming is a plan that phases out fossil fuel and nuclear power, develops clean, renewable energy sources, and reduces energy consumption.”

Greens, while criticizing the Kyoto Protocols’ modest measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, have called it an important first step, and continue to urge the U.S. to sign on and expand its goals.

“By ignoring energy conservation and embracing nuclear power, Democrats and Republicans who say they care about global warming have proved themselves only marginally better than President Bush,” said David Cobb, the Green Party’s 2004 presidential candidate. “Nuclear power is expensive, it would require the addition of 1,500 new plants worldwide to replace fossil fuel energy, it would present an enormous security and public health risk, and the storage of nuclear waste would be a permanent and growing environmental crisis.”

“Furthermore, nuclear power does nothing to address the major source of CO2 emissions — cars, trucks, and airplanes,” Mr. Cobb added. “But Congress and the White House have refused to enact and enforce more stringent fuel economy standards, such as the Corporate Average Fuel economy [CAFE] rules, or introduce consumer incentives to reduce demand, because of industry pressure.”

The Wisconsin Green Party stands on the four pillars of Ecological Wisdom, Social Justice, Grassroots Democracy, and Nonviolence.

Text of the Petition Effort in Wisconsin:

To the Governor and Legislators of Wisconsin:

We the undersigned urge you to maintain the current Wisconsin statutes regarding construction of new nuclear reactors in Wisconsin. The statutes require that there be an operating high-level nuclear waste repository which will accept the highly radioactive waste produced by any new nuclear reactors, and that such reactors be economically advantageous to Wisconsin ratepayers. These are common sense public interest provisions which should be met before any new reactors are built in our state. If the statutes cannot be met, then there should be no new reactors built in Wisconsin.

MORE INFORMATION

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