

REASONS WHY ILLINOIS SHOULD KEEP ITS NUCLEAR CONSTRUCTION MORATORIUM

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BACKGROUND: On Feb. 10, 2009 Rep. JoAnn Osmond (61st Dist., Antioch) introduced HB875 (Senate version: SB2162), to repeal a 1987 moratorium (the "Moratorium") which prohibits construction of new nuclear reactors in Illinois until a disposal facility first exists for the high-level radioactive wastes (HLRW). Since then, the Obama Administration removed future funding for the proposed Yucca Mt. Nevada HLRW dumpsite – effectively leaving no foreseeable options in play for HLRW disposal. For the reasons below this ill-conceived legislation fails to benefit Illinois, its citizens, environment or economy, while contributing greatly to potential public harm. This Repeal legislation should be rejected.

1.) THE ORIGINAL NEED FOR A MORATORIUM STILL EXISTS, AND BECAUSE OF THE CANCELLATION OF YUCCA MT., THE NEED TO PRESERVE THE MORATORIUM IS EVEN GREATER NOW THAN IN 1987:

- the very reason the Moratorium was instituted **still exists**: government didn't solve the original waste problem -- no demonstrated, environmentally acceptable means for the permanent geologic disposal of HLRW exists in the US; Illinois should not be made a de facto waste dump for hazardous high-level radioactive wastes.
- the solution is nowhere near ready. The February 2009 Obama Administration decision to effectively cancel Yucca Mt. leaves the US with no foreseeable HLRW disposal option for decades; whatever waste we have generated and will generate will stay here in Illinois for the indefinite future;
- new reactors would add to the present growing 8,000+ ton inventory of HLRW stored onsite next to Illinois rivers;
- 20-year extensions of the original 40-year operating licenses of EXISTING reactors planned for all operating Illinois nuclear reactors will continue to add more waste (and associated nuclear hazards) than was anticipated in 1987 to the HLRW inventory piling up in Illinois; this situation was not foreseen in 1987, but exists today;
- the Moratorium protects Illinois from added nuclear power threats and other problems emerging **since 1987**, such as:
 - increased threat from terrorism and sabotage, post-911
 - greater air traffic and larger aircraft to and from O'Hare Field, increasing the risk from accidental or terrorist crashes of airliners into reactors, HLRW fuel pools and dry-cask storage canisters
 - onset of pre-global warming conditions in the Midwest, causing lower volumes and flow-rates for the Illinois rivers used by the nuclear power plants (e.g., 1988; 2005; 2006), resulting in more thermal discharge damage

2.) REPEALING THE MORATORIUM ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE A PROBLEM THAT DOES NOT EVEN EXIST:

- Exelon Corp. currently has **no plans** to build a new reactor in Illinois (see reverse side); **there is no need to rush**.
- **no need** for extra power currently exists in Illinois; the 2007 Renewables Portfolio Standard will add 25% more power from renewable sources by 2020, which not only provides a guaranteed source for energy, but the "certainty" of how that power must be generated, something that corporations claim they prefer when doing long-range planning
- power from new nuclear units would be sold on the market benefiting Exelon Corporation while potentially inflicting all the negative aspects of nuclear power on the residents and ratepayers of Illinois (e.g. more wastes generated and stored onsite; threat of accident and sabotage; potential damage to water sources and eco-systems);

3.) REPEALING THE MORATORIUM SUBVERTS THE 2007 RENEWABLES PORTFOLIO STANDARD LEGISLATION:

- any new nuclear construction totally and deliberately undercuts and sabotages the recently passed Renewable Energy Portfolio standards (RPS) legislation of 25% renewable energy by 2020 by denying renewables the vitally needed market share that would help reduce costs of renewables via economies of scale.

Conclusions and Recommendations

A. **Conclusions:** Given these considerations NEIS concludes the following:

- Repealing the Moratorium is purposeless, meaningfully or rationally addressing no present or future urgent problems, while worsening the historic problems regarding nuclear power and HLRW storage and disposal.
- Repeal would negatively impact the economy, environment and the public health and safety of the people of Illinois.
- Repeal directly – perhaps intentionally -- subverts the intent of the Renewable Energy Portfolio standard, passed by the Illinois Legislature in 2007, delaying or possibly preventing increased use of renewable energy.

B. **Recommendations:** NEIS makes the following recommendations:

- Let the Moratorium on new reactor construction stand until the conditions laid out concerning HLRW disposal are met.
- Given the numerous drawbacks associated with the historic and future construction of new nuclear reactors in Illinois, **the Legislature should consider strengthening the Illinois Moratorium** by adding additional performance clauses regarding cost, water use and restrictions, post 9-11 security assessment, and prior attainment of the RPS goals.
- Obey and enforce the law – aggressively implement the already-passed 2007 Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard. Make it mandatory as a condition to do energy business in Illinois; enact stiff penalties to utilities not in compliance towards achieving the final goal, and assess intermediate production targets in 3-year increments.

C. **Contact your STATE legislators, asking them to vote against the Repeal.** To find your state legislators, go to the **Keep Us Connected** website: <http://ga6.org/action/leg-lookup/search.html?mode=state> ver.3-17-09