



# Nuclear Energy Information Service

*Illinois' Nuclear Power Watchdog for 26 years*

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### Cook County Board Unanimously Rejects DOE's GNEP Nuclear Plans

**CHICAGO**— In a stunning and emphatic rebuff to the wishes of the federal Department of Energy (DOE) and the nuclear industry, the Cook County Board voted unanimously Tuesday to reject potential DOE plans to site as many as two new nuclear facilities – including a power reactor -- in Illinois. The plan is called the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP).

"It is commendable that these elected officials saw through the dangerous PR veneer that GNEP is, and voted to protect their constituents from the real policy and environmental dangers GNEP represents," stated Shaun Burnie, a veteran independent energy analyst from Scotland, and former member of Greenpeace International.

Burnie, and colleague Aileen Mioko Smith from Kyoto, Japan were in Chicago on a speaking tour against the GNEP policy proposal. Both have had first hand experience in their respective countries with the kinds of facilities GNEP would promote.

"GNEP" stands for "global nuclear energy partnership." It is a Bush/Cheney Administration plan to expand all aspects of the nuclear industry – from nuclear power to nuclear weapons. GNEP promoters claim their new technologies would make nuclear materials more nuclear proliferation and terrorist "resistant." Yet, many credible science and policy experts believe that the various GNEP programs will actually have the opposite effect – the **increased** likelihood of nuclear theft, proliferation and terrorism, plus the added risk of new nuclear reactors. Currently 11 sites nationwide have submitted proposals to DOE to be considered for GNEP contracts. Two are in Illinois; and one across the border in Kentucky at Paducah, near Metropolis, IL.

"Having a governmental body representing millions of Illinois residents conclude that GNEP is **both** bad national nuclear policy **and** bad for Illinois' environment and economy shows how enormously out of step the nuclear industry and the U.S. government are with constituents on energy policy," noted Dave Kraft, director of Nuclear Energy Information Service (NEIS) of Chicago, an Illinois nuclear watch-dog organization. "Illinois – the most nuclear reliant state in the US – is telling them in no uncertain terms, 'Illinois has had enough. No more nuclear!'" Kraft says.

The Cook County Board joins a small and growing list of municipalities and other local jurisdictions that have passed resolutions against GNEP. Also having done so are Darien, Burr Ridge and Lyons Township – all near the Argonne National Laboratory, a GNEP candidate site; and the Bridgeview Park District in Cook County. They are also on or near the major roads and rail routes that the DOE has previously said would serve as possible transport corridors for future shipments of highly toxic irradiated fuel – or “high-level radioactive waste (HLRW) – shipments. Dozens of other Illinois municipalities are reviewing the possibility of passing similar resolutions.

“We have seen in Japan how big money and bought-political power has repeatedly ignored the wishes of local residents in siting or operating polluting and unwanted nuclear facilities nearby,” observed Aileen Mioko Smith, director of Green Action, a Japanese citizen organization based in Kyoto, Japan. She has played a central role in opposing plutonium fuel use in commercial nuclear reactors in Japan and is currently active in opposing the Rokkasho reprocessing plant in northern Japan. She contrasted the Cook County Board’s actions with those of Japanese officials as seen in the documentary, *Rokkasho Rhapsody*, a recent movie about a new reprocessing facility in Japan cited over the objections of local people. The film conveyed the message that local people and public officials together have to stand up to the bullying influence of the nuclear industry to protect their homes and livelihoods.

The sites under consideration in Illinois for GNEP facilities are the Argonne National Laboratory; and the General Electric Morris Operation site in Morris. Both are southwest of Illinois off of I-55.

While local concerns about siting new nuclear facilities in densely populated and growing urban areas and transportation are the main concerns of the local resolutions, the Cook County Resolution also sees the broader energy and nuclear proliferation policy implications as important. The offices of both Attorney General Lisa Madigan and U.S. Senator Richard Durbin have written strongly worded letters directed to DOE expressing their concerns about GNEP.

“GNEP is both bad policy; and a local environmental and economic threat. The DOE needs to abandon it and adopt safer and more proliferation resistant proposals put forth by the national safe-energy community in 2002 to deal with high-level radioactive wastes and irradiated fuel. These resolutions are a strong indicator that the people are starting to lead; the leaders had better make plans to follow,” Kraft warned.

Resolutions will soon be available on the NEIS website at [www.neis.org](http://www.neis.org). The Cook County resolution is available from the County Board staff.