



# Nuclear Energy Information Service

*"Illinois' Nuclear Power Watchdog for 23 years"*

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## PRESS RELEASE

For release:  
4:00 p.m., CDST  
Wednesday, June 29, 2005

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### NAS PANEL TORPEDOES THE SELF-PROCLAIMED "NUCLEAR RENAISSANCE"

**EVANSTON**—The conclusions of a long-awaited National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report affirms that even extremely low doses of ionizing radiation pose a health and cancer risk; and that no threshold exists below which such exposures can be treated as harmless. This authoritative conclusion runs counter to the long-held and noisily promoted views of the nuclear power industry, and threaten the very possibility of its self-proclaimed "nuclear renaissance," nuclear critics argue.

"The scientific research base shows that there is no threshold of exposure below which low levels of ionizing radiation can be demonstrated to be harmless or beneficial...The health risks—particularly the development of solid cancers in organs—rise proportionally with exposure...*As the overall lifetime exposure increases, so does the risk,*" states NAS committee chair Robert R. Monson of the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, MA.

"It is that last statement which spells the doom of the "nuclear renaissance," maintains David A. Kraft, director of Nuclear Energy Information Service of Illinois, a safe-energy nuclear watchdog organization. "The more nuclear plants you build, the greater the exposure to the public and the workforce from accidents and allowable releases. There's just no escaping it – more nuclear plants will lead to increases of cancer and other health effects," Kraft states.

For the past two years the nuclear industry has desperately tried to persuade the public and policy makers that it is experiencing a rebound, and that more nuclear plants are needed and just around the corner. They announced a self-styled "nuclear renaissance" to be the answer to many of the energy problems ailing the US and the world.

In recent months the nuclear industry has attempted to portray itself as an increasingly environmentally acceptable means of combating global warming. Its nationwide media campaign has enlisted the voices of some noted former environmentalists as mouthpieces for this position, who state that, given the (false) choice between the long-standing environmental reluctance to support nuclear power and global warming, it's better to choose nuclear power.

"The NAS report tells us what nuclear critics have maintained all along: that the real choice nuclear power offers is actually between global warming effects on the one hand, and increased negative health effects on the other. That's not a viable or intelligent choice. The NAS study shows just how naked the nuclear emperor really is," Kraft asserts.

Various energy experts have maintained that it would take between 2,000 and 8,000 new nuclear reactors worldwide to eliminate enough fossil fuel generating plants to have an appreciable effect on global warming. This represents a 5 to 20-fold increase over the current 442 nuclear reactors operating worldwide.

"To allow the nuclear industry to 'rescue' humanity from global warming would inevitably result in a huge increase in observable negative health effects, just from the routine, permissible releases of radiation," Kraft asserts. "Add in the increased likelihood of larger releases from expanding the nuclear fuel cycle activities, and from accidents and possible terrorist activities, and the nuclear 'solution' becomes an outright curse," Kraft concludes.

Safe-energy advocates maintain that a more aggressive implementation of energy efficiency, conservation and renewable energy resources such as wind power, solar, and biomass are far better choices to reverse climate change,

possessing none of the negative effects that nuclear has: threat from catastrophic accidents and terrorist activity; long-lived nuclear wastes; and now, verified damaging health effects from both routine and accidental releases of radiation.

“It is unfortunate that this study was released one day *after* the U.S. Senate voted to waste over \$10 billion in subsidies to support nuclear power expansion,” Kraft laments, referring to the Tuesday passage of the Senate energy bill. “We’ll never know if they would have deliberately forced the public to endure the increased health risks that will result if they actually expand the nuclear industry.”

“What is known is that the nuclear industry no longer has a rational leg to stand on for continuing its nonsensical ‘nuclear renaissance’ mantra of ‘clean and emissions-free energy’ -- especially when other preferable options exist, yet remain underutilized,” Kraft states. “Increased health risks, cancers, DNA damage and genomic instabilities reported in the NAS study don’t come from something that is ‘emissions-free,’” he points out.

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*NEIS was founded in 1981 to provide the public with credible information on nuclear power hazards; and with information about viable alternatives to nuclear power.*