

GAINSAYER

NEWSLETTER FOR GEORGIANS AGAINST NUCLEAR ENERGY

SUMMER 1989

VOTE SHUTS DOWN NUKE !

Could this be the beginning of the end for nuclear power? The people of Sacramento have closed the Rancho Seco nuclear power plant through a public referendum. The final vote tallied at 111,867 voting to close and 97,480 voting to maintain the plant (53.4 percent to 46.6 percent).

The plant stopped producing electricity on Wednesday, June 7, 1989. The president of the city-owned utility said that decommissioning of the plant is expected to cost \$500,000,000.

Prior to the vote on Tuesday, June 6, both sides actively engaged in fundraising (proponents spent \$800,000 and opponents raised about \$100,000) and voter education.

The proponents' donor list looked like a who's who of the nuclear industry: Babcock & Wilcox and Bechtel Power Corp., the companies that designed and built the 15-year-old plant were among the top donors. Georgia Power was high on the list with a donation of \$15,000, as was Alabama Power who gave \$10,000.

According to Tom Clements who worked with Sacramentans for Safe Energy in opposing the plant, the Georgia Power donation "reflects that Georgia Power is more committed to nuclear power at any cost and risk in California than it is to serious consideration of safe, clean and economical power production in our own state." Tom is from Georgia and is a volunteer for Campaign for a Prosperous Georgia.

The nuclear industry is a faltering industry which is frantically trying to sell the American public that nuclear energy is the best type of energy production for the future. Industry spokesmen say that nuclear energy does not contribute to the greenhouse effect, reduces dependence on foreign oil, and is clean, efficient and safe. These are false statements

made by an industry heavily in debt due to huge construction and maintenance bills from their power plants — and in dire need of a return on their investment.

Safe, clean and efficient energy production lies in two directions. First, we can use renewable energy technologies such as solar, wind, biomass (primarily wood, wood waste and agricultural waste), and geothermal energy.

Energy conservation is the other avenue to meeting our energy needs and can be achieved through a combination of regulations such as energy efficiency requirements in new construction, incentive programs funded by utility companies, and demonstration programs on state-of-the-art equipment to commercial and residential consumers. We can reduce the consumption of electricity by half. Japan and Sweden are already living it with lifestyles comparable to ours.

The closing of the Rancho Seco plant is a major victory for the environmental movement. This is the first time that a plant has been closed by public decree. This should be an incentive for more municipalities

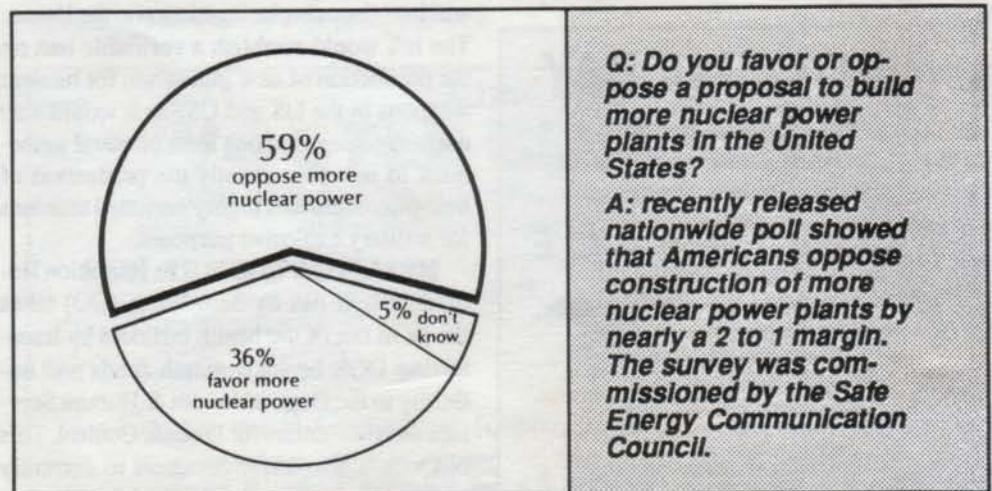
and states to close their nuclear power plants.

As more nuclear power plants are closed, more resources will be allocated for cleaner, safer and cheaper energy options. A 1985 study done by Reagan's own Department of Energy indicates that aggressive government support will make possible renewable energy's providing up to 80% of energy needs by the year 2010. In other words, there is no technological barrier to a renewable energy-based economy. It is a question of political will.

President Bush has declared himself an environmentalist. As such, environmentally conscious energy policy demands funding research and development of renewable energy.

These funds were cut 90% during the Reagan administration. If George Bush is an environmentalist, he must stop the production of radioactive materials through nuclear power production and implement stringent conservation measures. When this is done we can see the dawn of the age of the environmentalist.

—Patricia Giblin



Q: Do you favor or oppose a proposal to build more nuclear power plants in the United States?

A: recently released nationwide poll showed that Americans oppose construction of more nuclear power plants by nearly a 2 to 1 margin. The survey was commissioned by the Safe Energy Communication Council.

LEADING THE LEADERS

SRP WORKING GROUP TAKES ACTION

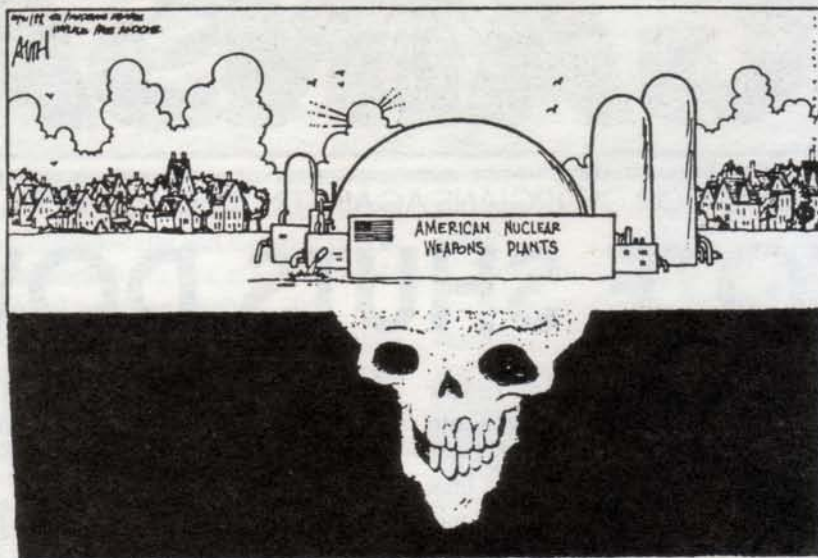
The Savannah River Plant (SRP) Working Group is a coalition of environmental, peace, and community groups working together to stop the continued threat to the environment and to peace by nuclear weapons production at SRP and other US Department of Energy (DOE) facilities. Our many concerns include: cleaning up chemical and nuclear waste, developing effective waste storage and disposal methods, protecting wildlife habitats, finding replacement jobs for workers, shifting federal spending to human needs programs, encouraging health studies, and furthering arms control.

This is the preliminary mission statement for the SRP Working Group which has been meeting regularly to address the increasing problems facing nuclear weapons production facilities in this country.

The coalition has wasted no time getting into action. Six members from the group were among over 150 from around the country who went to Washington in early April to lobby Congress on numerous issues and/or legislation.

The Working Group is also monitoring pending lawsuits filed by various groups including The Energy Research Foundation, Greenpeace, and the Natural Resources Defense Council. The lawsuits are primarily aimed at preventing the re-opening of any reactors at SRP before an Environmental Impact Statement is totally completed, not during the hearings process.

What can you do to keep SRP and similar facilities shut down? Our efforts are currently focused on the passage of the following federal legislation. It is essential that our repre-



sentatives and senators receive letters, telegrams, or phone calls from citizens on these issues.

CLEANUP. Cost estimates for cleaning up DOE facilities range from \$100-\$200 billion. At the current \$478 million appropriation, it would take more than 300 years to clean up the mess. Sen. Adams (WA) and Rep. Dicks (WA) plan to introduce the Adams/Dicks Environmental Response Trust Fund, which would set up independent waste management oversight by state authorities and appropriate federal agencies such as EPA. It would also set up a funding plan for each facility to cover long-term clean up.

HALT PLUTONIUM PRODUCTION. The International Plutonium Control Act introduced by Sens. Kennedy (MA) and Wirth (CO) calls for a negotiated plutonium moratorium. Reps. Fascal (FL) and Wyden (OR) will introduce similar legislation in the House. The bill would establish a verifiable ban on the production of new plutonium for nuclear weapons in the US and USSR. It would also encourage negotiations for a bilateral agreement to halt permanently the production of new plutonium and highly enriched uranium for military explosive purposes.

HEALTH STUDIES. The Radiation Reorganization Act by Sen. Wirth (CO) takes the DOE out of the health business by transferring DOE health research funds and authority to the Dept. of Health & Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control. This bill would also improve access to currently secret information related to health and safety

of workers at defense nuclear facilities. In the House a similar bill is the Nuclear Weapons Production Health & Safety Act (HR1643) introduced by Rep. Skaggs (C).

SAFETY COMPLIANCE. Nuclear weapons production facilities are not required to meet the health & safety standards required of commercial reactors. The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Enforcement Act (HR1056) introduced by Rep. Eckart (OH) will force DOE to meet these standards set by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

These are just a few of the issues on which we are working. Please pick up that pen and writing pad or get on that computer and write a brief letter to not only your representative in Congress, but also your senators! Don't hesitate to write to other Congressional members from Georgia or from the rest of the nation.

With tensions letting up internationally, this is a great time for action to end the insane arms race. Let's do our part. For more info call 584-9902 (SANE/FREEZE) or 525-7306 (GANE). Check these numbers for upcoming meetings and events including Hiroshima Day commemorative activities in August.

— Danny Feig-Sandoval

HIROSHIMA DAY

Sunday, August 6, 1989
Savannah River Nuclear Weapons Plant
JOIN US IN A VIGIL FOR
WORLD PEACE

Carpools are being organized.
Mark this important date on your calendar.
You will receive a special mailing
after details are worked out.

GANE is co-sponsoring the vigil
with SANE/FREEZE, Greenpeace and others.
GANE will be responsible for one hour of programming
during the vigil.

Artists, teachers, musicians, speakers, activists...
GANE seeks your ideas and involvement. 404/525-7306.

SUMMER GAINSAYER 1989

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VOGTLE BOONDOGGLE NOW COMPLETE

On May 20, Nuclear Plant Vogtle's Unit 2 began sending electricity to our homes. It also began releasing radiation to the air and producing toxic nuclear waste. Plant Vogtle is more dangerous and more expensive than any other electricity generating technology in use. We are now subject to the largest electric rate increases in Georgia history, and our state is faced with more nuclear hazards than ever. With two nuclear reactors at Plant Hatch, and now two at Plant Vogtle, Georgia is threatened with plant accidents, nuclear waste hazards and transportation of radioactive substances to an unprecedented level.

Here are some specifics on Vogtle's direct impact on Georgia:

COST: \$9 billion were spent to realize what started as a \$600 million construction plan — \$9 billion which Georgia Power hopes the Public Service Commission will recover for them by increasing our rates \$1 billion per year for the 30-year life of the plant. It costs more to operate — *just to operate* — Plant Vogtle than to conserve. Georgia Power could reap a high return on an investment by investing in energy efficiency while idling the Vogtle units. Accidents and equipment failures will make Vogtle even more expensive.

NUCLEAR WASTE: The plant will produce approximately 60 tons of high level radioactive waste per year. Experts have stated that the more than 10,000 tons of waste produced in the US so far may never be disposed of in a secure manner. Will we be asked to choose the "least of evils" instead of a true technical solution?

NATIONAL WASTE DUMP: In 1986 middle Georgia was under intense scrutiny by the feds for possible siting of a high-level nuclear waste repository (dump). The Dept. of Energy (DOE) then determined that reduced projections for nuclear power meant their second national repository was not needed, temporarily removing this threat to Georgia. But increased production of waste from Vogtle and other plants could mean that our state will be forced to accept the waste from half of the reactors in the US.

GOVERNMENT REGULATION: The two federal agencies (DOE and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission — NRC) charged with protecting us from nuclear hazards are at best incompetent, and at worst in collusion with private nuclear industry. The DOE has a colossal problem on its hands in dealing with

waste from nuclear weapons production, and now we are asked to trust them with more and more nuclear power waste.

The NRC, charged with nuclear plant safety, is actually trying to relax controls on reactors and has repeatedly promoted nuclear power. The NRC has failed to accomplish safety improvements on existing reactors after requiring the changes 10 years ago in the wake of the Three Mile Island disaster. How can we feel safe with NRC regulation of Vogtle?

THREAT TO WATER SUPPLY: Plant Vogtle was constructed directly over the Tuscaloosa Aquifer — the source of drinking water for the southern half of Georgia. A layer of clay claimed as a barrier to radiation leaks was actually penetrated by test holes, providing a direct path from the plant to the aquifer.

ACCIDENT VULNERABILITY: Vogtle, like all light water reactors in the US, is subject to many avenues for nuclear mishaps. However, it is even more vulnerable to certain types of accidents due to its particular design and construction. The Westinghouse steam generators used in Vogtle are a case in point. Because of past failures in the Westinghouse design, many reactors have had to replace their generators. Failure of the Vogtle steam generators would create a direct path of radioactivity from the core of the reactor to the outside environment.

Many safety deficiencies have been raised by the very workers who built the plant, including welders responsible for the cooling pipes. A recent case was of two nuclear security coordinators who have stated that neither Vogtle 1 or Vogtle 2 should be licensed because of missing and inadequate safety documentation. The welders were fired. The secu-

rity coordinators were demoted and denied further access to documents.

EARTHQUAKE: The question remains whether Vogtle is adequately designed to withstand an earthquake in the area. A recent study shows that earthquake activity in the southeast US is not well understood by scientists and the potential for large quakes may actually be much greater than previously estimated.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT VOGTLE?

There is still a chance to minimize the economic effect of Vogtle on the ratepayers. The rate case for Unit 2 will be heard at the Public Service Commission this summer, starting with a public hearing on July 17 at 10AM. We can call the PSC at 404/656-4501 for more details and to leave messages for the commissioners.

As Vogtle operates, we must be vigilant for accidents and safety compromises, and help to expose these dangers and costs to the public. We must pressure our public officials to tighten rather than relax controls on nuclear plants. And we must continue to push for all sectors of society including the power company to invest in safer and lower cost energy choices.

Public pressure and awareness has played an immense role in halting the further construction of nuclear plants in the US. We, the people, have closed our first nuclear plant, Rancho Seco this month! Continued vigilance and pressure will eventually begin to close down the rest of the plants. We can only hope that occurs before another major nuclear accident and before the nuclear waste volume is totally out of control.

— Dennis Hoffarth

CALLING ALL

VOGTLE BUSTERS !

Last chance to register official objections to Vogtle at the Public Service Commission!

STRATEGY SESSION

for developing individual testimony
7:30 pm Thursday, July 13, 1989
Highland Library
corner N. Highland & St. Charles

PUBLIC HEARINGS

10:00 am Monday, July 17, 1989
Public Service Commission
Let's pack the place on this first day of public testimony.

Come with Creative Ideas and an Open Mind!
LET'S MAKE AN IMPACT!

NUKE NOTES

Glenn Carroll, 1989



Mares eat oats and does eat oats and little lambs eat cesium-137 . . .

The following item is taken from a lengthy article "Sheep farming after Chernobyl" from the March 1989 issue of *Environment*.

Chernobyl fallout has had profound effects on some parts of the globe. In an example not unlike the consequences suffered by the nomadic reindeer herders of northern Scandinavia, the hill sheep farmers in England's Lake District have been subjected to market restrictions due to radioactive contamination of their sheep and lambs since two weeks after the Chernobyl nuclear accident in Spring 1986.

The cesium-137 deposited by heavy rainfall has not been immobilized in the soil as scientists previously theorized. The cesium-137 has remained at extremely dangerous levels in the sheep — increasing in concentration over time

rather than decreasing.

The hardest hit area is the region that also received the worst fallout from the 1957 reactor fire at the nuclear fuel reprocessing facility Windscale (now Sellafield). Until Chernobyl, this fire was the world's worst recorded nuclear accident, resulting in a 200-square-mile milk ban in its wake.

Although British government officials are laying all the blame for the continued restrictions on Chernobyl, the depositions of cesium-137 in the fells around Sellafield register ten times the highest recorded levels of Chernobyl deposits.

(DeKalb News Sun, 5/31/89) Last summer radioactive contamination was discovered at the irradiation firm, Radiation Sterilizers Inc. in Decatur. Experimental

cesium capsules manufactured from radioactive waste contaminated the 25,000 gallons of water used to control the searing temperatures associated with cesium.

At great expense to the taxpayers the defective cesium capsule was sought by robots and TV cameras and finally discovered by sheer accident six months after the search began. Now more leaking capsules are being discovered. On top of that, it is becoming apparent that the harmful gamma radiation which cesium emits may not be sufficiently contained in the lead shipping cask created to ship the waste back to Hanford, Washington. Radiation has been discovered making its way through the thick lead shielding.

(Atlanta Journal/Constitution 4/8/89) The Nuclear Regulatory Commission in April adopted a major streamlining of nuclear licensing it hopes will keep the industry alive by roughly halving the time needed to build a nuclear power plant.

Although there is no sign that any utilities are close to seeking approval, the commission staff, utility executives and other analysts have said that there was no chance anyone would ever build another plant without some licensing simplification.

(Atlanta Journal/Constitution 4/16/89) After spending more than 20 years and \$5.5 billion on the Shoreham nuclear power plant, the Long Island Lighting Co.'s board of directors Friday endorsed Gov. Mario M. Cuomo's plan to close the reactor.

If shareholders approve the deal — and they are expected to do so in June — the utility would abandon efforts to win a commercial operating license for Shoreham and would sell the plant to the state for \$1.

BRC. Another obscure but profound nuclear conspiracy has been sneaked by the watchdogs. BRC — Below Regulatory Concern — was adopted by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission early this year. Under BRC, 30% of waste con-

taining ionizing radiation will be redefined. Once-hazardous waste that required particular handling is linguistically rendered non-hazardous. Now it may be legally thrown in with the trash or dumped into the sewer. Register a complaint with the nearest congressman or senator, city and county officials. Geiger counters for everyone!

One of the hottest contests yet between the nuclear industry and advocates of sane energy rages over New Hampshire's Seabrook Nuclear Plant.

The plant was granted a low-power license May 25, 1989. It was not started until 10 days later while the courts had objections under review. Seabrook went critical on June 13, 1989, at 5:30 pm and promptly broke three valves.

An estimated 4,000-5,000 turned out in early June to protest Seabrook's low-power license with nearly 1,000 arrested for civil disobedience. Seabrook is located across a bay from Massachusetts resorts.

The lack of a proper emergency response plan is a primary objection and has raised the ire of Massachusetts' Attorney General who has stated his intentions to carry his fight for Massachusetts' safety to the US Supreme Court if necessary. His objections are shared by Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis.

(Atlanta Constitution 6/18/89) The Department of Energy (DOE) has assured Colorado Gov. Roy Romer that the state will be able to independently monitor activity at the Rocky Flats nuclear plant, which is under investigation for safety violations.

The promise was part of an agreement reached by DOE and Mr. Romer after the governor's threat last week to shut down the plant.

"We are going to operate on the basis that people need to know the truth, and we are going to get it to them in a way in which it is verified independently of the operation of the plant," Romer said.



FUSION CONFUSION

On March 23, 1989, Dr. B. Stanley Pons of the University of Utah, and Dr. Martin Fleishmann of the University of Southampton in England announced that they had created nuclear fusion in a glass bottle using water, metal, electricity and little more. The response from the scientific community has been mixed; while some scientists are excited and have tried, albeit so far in vain, to replicate the experiment, many others seem doubtful not only of the results claimed, but of the manner in which the experimental process was handled.

So, why all the fuss? Because IF cold fusion is or can become a reality, and IF it can be developed for large scale commercial use, then the ways and means by which we meet the energy needs of the world will be changed forever. But those are very big IFs.

Fusion refers to the process by which atoms are forced together such that their nuclei FUSE. The

sun and all the stars release their heat and energy from fusion, but this is fusion made to occur due to the extremely intense heat and pressure at the core of the stars. Cold fusion, though, occurs at room temperature in controlled settings. In the experiment at the University of Utah, a palladium rod wrapped in platinum wire was placed in "heavy water". Heavy water — D₂O — is water that contains only deuterium atoms (a naturally occurring form of hydrogen) instead of hydrogen. Deuterium atoms have twice the mass of hydrogen. An electric current separated the deuterium from the oxygen, and the palladium then absorbed the deuterium into its open-weave type structure. The deuterium atoms then are pulled in so tightly that the nuclei fuse, releasing energy and supposedly little else. (The "little else" does contain radiation.) The environmental hazards common to our current energy fuels, such

as greenhouse gases, excess radioactivity, water pollutants, etc. are theoretically absent or minimal.

Although cold fusion sounds promising, scientists are in agreement that at least 20 or 30 years of research still needs to follow, and even then, cold fusion on a large scale may not work and may have hazards as yet undiscovered. In this interim research period renewable energy sources such as solar, renewable and conservation technologies may eclipse any fusion developments and have the added promise of low-risk and decentralized use.

—Cate Morrill

ATOMIC PRIMER

ARE THERE FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVES TO NUCLEAR POWER? Yes, there are many. Modern coal plants equipped with scrubbers to reduce the threat of acid rain will be our primary producer of electricity well into the 21st century. But the fastest-growing source of electricity is "cogeneration," which is the use of in-

dustrial heat to generate electricity. Even McDonald's and Burger King have embarked on pilot cogeneration projects. Remarkable advances in energy efficiency hold great promise in reducing our need for electricity. For example, light bulbs have been developed which last for 12 years and provide the light of a 75 watt bulb using only 10 watts.

Wind, water, geothermal and solar energy, along with simple energy conservation, are also viable alternatives and merit further utilization. But in 1985, the Department of Energy spent nearly 60% of its budget on nuclear power. That investment is not paying off — every dollar of subsidy spent on efficiency and renewable energy technology bought 80 times as much energy as a subsidy dollar to nuclear power. For the US to become truly energy independent will require a reordering of our government's energy priorities.

SOURCE: Nuclear Information & Resource Service (NIRS), 1424 16th Street NW, Suite 601, Washington, DC 20036, 202/328-0002.

NOTICE • NOTICE • NOTICE

We've been loose with subscription payments for the GAINSAYER, but no more! We must recover the cost of producing and distributing the newsletter. Please stay with us by filling out the membership subscription form and send a minimum of \$10 to continue receiving the GAINSAYER.

As you can see from this issue, we have a lot of news to share with you. Don't be left in the dark!

Subscribe TODAY!

YES! I'd rather be active than radioactive!

I am a "Georgian Against Nuclear Energy."

I support the goals of phasing out the use of nuclear energy as soon as possible, optimizing the use of energy conservation and renewable energy, and opposing the use of nuclear weapons.

\$ 5 Active!

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I can't afford to send money but I want to receive newsletter.

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Name _____

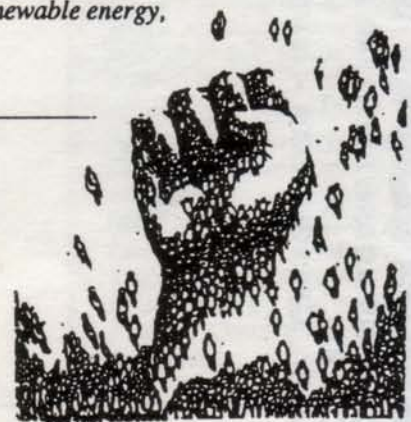
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Fill out and return today before it's too hot! **Georgians Against Nuclear Energy**
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NUCLEAR POWER:

ENVIRONMENTAL SAVIOR OR A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING?

You surely have heard by now that the nuclear industry is posing as environmentalists ready to save the world from the greenhouse effect and resulting global warming.

Signs from here are that the industry's slick magazine ads have been effective and we should be able to speak to the debate when it comes up in conversation.

Nuclear pollution does not contain CO₂—the chief "greenhouse" gas contributing to global warming—however, the fission reaction itself produces awesome quantities of heat which are added to the earth's surface and atmosphere. Plus, the construction of nuclear power plants and the entire process of mining, milling and transporting uranium for fuel consume huge amounts of fossil fuels.

When you look at the pollution caused by various energy sources, anyone can see that trading CO₂ emissions for deadly radioactive nuclides which persist for millennia and for which there is no known sufficient storage method is pretty much jumping from the frying pan into the fire, especially in light of non-polluting alternatives—the most immediate of which is simple conservation.

As of right now, we use twice as much energy as Japan per dollar of GNP and twice as much energy as Sweden to enjoy a comparable lifestyle. Our first benefit of a national will to become energy efficient will be to regain our economic edge in the world market!

Scientists say that we can use existing energy conserving technology to cut our

energy consumption, and thereby our CO₂ emissions, in half. To move from fossil fuel to nuclear power on a global scale would require the installation of two nuclear plants per day for 25 years at a cost of \$50 trillion (according to Greenpeace). It takes an investment of fossil fuel to construct nuclear plants, so even if it were economically and technically possible to accomplish this feat, at best we would reduce global warming by about 20%.

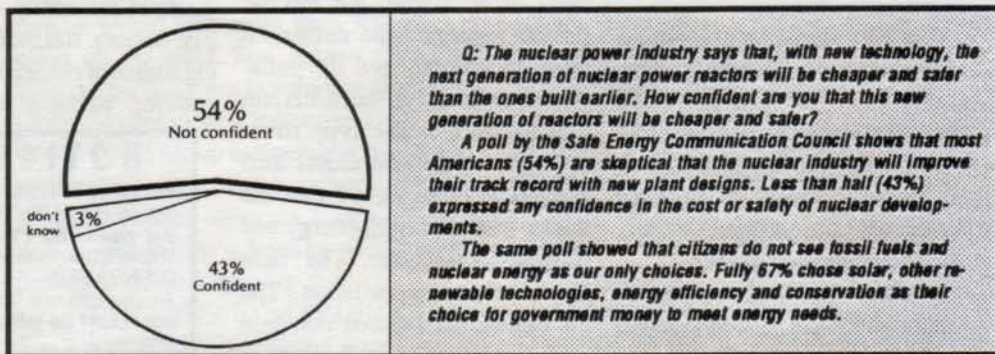
Another study from the Rocky Mountain Institute concluded that each dollar invested in energy efficiency displaces up to seven times more CO₂ than a dollar invested in nuclear power.

Then, the argument turns to the mythical "new generation of inherently safe nuclear power." Personally, I won't buy this claim from the same industry which promised safe energy too cheap to meter, then delivered overbudget plants, nearly bankrupt utilities, Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, but some folks have a greater capacity for second (or

should I say seventh?) chances than I, and to them I would suggest that they reflect on the amount of time and money it will take to design and test these new power plants—then construct them—and is this proposed solution timely enough to have any effect whatsoever on runaway global warming in 1989?

The cutting edge of energy in the '90s will be what's known as demand-side planning—conservation, least cost planning, rate design, and cogeneration. We also have made huge strides toward practical large-scale uses of renewable energy like solar, geothermal, wind and biomass energy. In fact, in 1989, renewable energy contributes 8.6 percent of our energy, in contrast to nuclear's 6 percent contribution!

So, don't be fooled by all that fancy advertising that claims that nuclear energy is the answer to global warming—and remember what Mom said, "Turn out the light when you leave the room!" —Glenn Carroll



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