

December 2008

the nuclear edition...

CAUSE

**CITIZENS
ADVOCATING the
USE of
SUSTAINABLE
ENERGY**



COALITION PETITION OPPOSING NUCLEAR SUBMITTED TO ALBERTA LEGISLATURE

“Albertans are dreaming in Technicolor if they think private industry would bear the entire cost of nuclear energy if it comes to this province,” says Brenda Brochu, VP of the Coalition for a Nuclear Free Alberta (CNFA), a province-wide alliance of groups opposing nuclear power. “This has never happened anywhere in the world and it would not happen here.”

Albertans have been led to believe that nuclear power will clean up our image as a producer of dirty oil,” adds CNFA President Adele Boucher Rymhs. “But producing large quantities of radioactive wastes is not the solution. It will only create more environmental problems for many generations to come.”

Brenda and Adele spoke at a media conference in Edmonton just before provincial opposition parties presented the CNFA petitions to the legislature. In total the petitions held about 2500 signatures of residents from around the province who oppose nuclear reactors in Alberta. The CNFA petition urged the provincial government to “develop an energy policy which encourages conservation, promotes the use of safe, clean, renewable energy sources and explicitly rejects nuclear power in this province.” NDP environment critic Rachel Notley presented the petitions from northern Alberta while Liberal MLA Harry Chase submitted those from the South.

In the legislature Ms. Notley challenged the government to produce the report promised from a nuclear panel formed last spring by stating; “In April this government appointed a nuclear panel stacked with pro-nuclear academic and industry personnel. We were told that Albertans could expect to see a report by the fall. This very contentious issue deserves public scrutiny and debate in our Legislature. To the Minister of Energy, Albertans have had enough with secrets and closed doors. Only days remain in this fall session. Where’s your report, and why won’t you let us see it?” Ms Notley went on to ask the Minister whether the government was “prepared to say here and now that we will not be publicly subsidizing nuclear energy in Alberta, not one public penny, not ever?”

Provincial Energy Minister Mel Knight’s response: “A very interesting concept indeed, not one public penny, not ever.



I would not be able to answer that part of it. However, what I will say is that the economics around the nuclear issue as it relates to the province of Alberta is one of the questions that will be answered by the panel.”

A media conference was simultaneously held in Calgary where Elena Schacherl, Co-chair of CAUSE, formally presented the southern Alberta petitions to Calgary Liberal MLAs Dave Taylor and Dr. David Swann.

Dr. Swann states: “In my view nuclear energy is not a cost-effective approach to our provincial and national energy needs and it directs resources away from long-term renewable energy and energy conservation initiatives.” In Mr. Taylor’s opinion: “The proponents of nuclear power are peddling it as a quick fix for global warming, but there are so many other things we should be exploring and developing first -- clean technology for oil, gas and oilsands production, renewables like wind and solar, and above all, conservation. Nuclear is neither quick, nor easy, nor cheap. And it's not the way we should be going.”

CNFA spokesperson Brenda Brochu concluded, “The truth is that no amount of money could restore the environment to its original condition if there were a catastrophic nuclear accident. Why are we even considering taking this risk when there are cheaper, cleaner alternatives that can be up and running much more quickly?”

An earlier petition with more than 1,500 signatures was presented by Peace River MLA Frank Oberle last November. Those signatures were residents who objected to the construction of a nuclear power plant in their region.

“CAUSE is extremely pleased to be a member of the Coalition for a Nuclear Free Alberta,” said Elena Schacherl. “The Coalition has made it possible for Albertans to unite and send a strong message to the provincial government to reject nuclear as a form of energy.”

DO ALBERTANS HAVE CIVIC FREEDOM?

During the recent U.S. Presidential campaign, independent candidate Ralph Nader asked his audiences the question; "Is there anything left for the American people to decide, other than their personal lives?"

"Let us not mistake personal freedoms for civic freedom," Mr. Nader cautioned his audience.

To make the point, Mr. Nader explained personal freedoms as those things we freely decide for ourselves, including such things as the kinds of food we eat, whom we associate with, how we make our living, whom we marry, where we live, where we go for our vacations, what books we read, what TV programs we watch and what music we listen to. These are examples of our personal freedoms. But Mr. Nader then stressed even those individuals who live under dictatorships have much the same personal freedoms as these.

What then, is civic freedom and do we have it in within our democracy? Marcus Cicero, over two thousand years ago, described civic freedom as '**participation in power**'.

The question Nader posed to voting Americans is equally appropriate for Albertans. Is there anything left for Albertans to decide, other than our personal lives? Do Albertans have civic freedom, do we participate in power?

One could easily argue that civic freedom for Albertans should include the way in which we will develop our natural resources, including those in the Tar Sands around Ft. McMurray. Do Albertans have a real say in the

nature and pace of development in the Tar Sands?

How will the question of nuclear power be answered in this province? Will our civic freedom decide or will market forces and political ideology dominate the decision making process?

We are living in a great democratic experiment in Alberta. Nuclear power is a fundamental democratic and human rights question that will have profound effects on this province for decades and centuries to come. Will Albertans be given a real opportunity to participate in this decision? If so, will Albertans get all of the information they need to make an informed choice? If nuclear is considered a key requirement for future Tar Sands development, how will that effect our civic freedom - our participation in power?

If Albertans are apathetic about this issue, nuclear power will be a slam dunk. If Albertans believe everything Bruce Power tells them, nuclear power is likely here to stay. If the Alberta government believes nuclear power is necessary for the the Tar Sands, those opposed to the idea will face an uphill battle.

If nuclear gets the go ahead and issues or problems result, if people get sick, if accidents with radioactive materials occur, if communities are victimized, it will be too late to do anything about it since the multi-billion dollar investments will have been made, the revenues will have begun and our civic freedom will have been eroded.

Albertans will only get one opportunity to decide, one chance to exercise our civic freedom when it comes to nuclear power. What will you decide and how will you act?

EXERCISE YOUR CIVIC FREEDOMS TODAY...



Call or write your MLA and tell him or her your view on nuclear power.

Talk to your friends and family and let them know about this issue.

Join, volunteer or donate to CAUSE and become part of the growing coalition of Alberta citizens fighting nuclear power & promoting sustainable energy instead.



GERMAN STUDY CONCLUDES...

CANCERS IN YOUNG CHILDREN & NUCLEAR PLANTS - 'A SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP'

AS REPORTED BY HEINZ-JURGEN PETER

A German epidemiological study of child-aged cancer cases showed a statistically significant relationship between the number of cancer cases and the proximity of residence to nuclear power plants: Specifically, the number of the cancer cases increased significantly as the distance between a child's residence and the nuclear plant decreased. For the subgroup of leukaemia cases the statistically significant results were even stronger according to this study.

The study was commissioned by the Federal Office for Radiation Protection and funded by the Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany. It was conducted by the Institute for Medical Biostatistics, Epidemiology and Informatics of the University of Mainz in October 2007.

The study examined 1,592 cases resulting from all childhood cancer diagnosed and reported to the German Childhood Cancer Registry between 1980 and 2003. All the children were under the age of 5 at the time of the diagnosis and lived in pre-defined regions around 16 German nuclear power plants.

Between 1980 and 2003, 77 cases of cancer were diagnosed in children under five, living within 5 km of one of 16 German nuclear power plants under study. Based on the average cancer rate for this age group and this period of time for the whole of Germany, 48 cases would be expected. Thus, the risk to children in this age group living within 5 km of one of power plants and being diagnosed with cancer was about 60% higher than expected between 1980 and 2003.

In the time period, thirty-seven cases of leukaemia were diagnosed in children under five years old living and living within 5 km of any of nuclear plants under study. This compares with 17 cases that would be expected for this age group based on the average leukaemia rate for the whole of Germany. The risk for children under five being diagnosed with leukaemia between 1980 and 2003 living in proximity to one of the nuclear power plants studied was thus more than 100% higher than expected.

This detailed German study of childhood cancer is the most comprehensive examination in this field worldwide.

Compared with similar studies this study is outstanding as the result is statistically significant and furthermore it is not restricted to one particular nuclear power plant but considers sixteen plants. After the study was published the German Environment Minister ordered the government's Radiation Protection Commission to review it. A committee of twelve external independent experts found out that the study is methodologically accurate. In fact, they said the study was flawless.

It should be noted that other experts also considered the study to be exemplary, as it was well-designed and carefully conducted.

In a press conference held in Berlin the committee of the twelve external experts pointed out that it was possible to extend one of the study results from the 5 km zone around the nuclear power plants to a 50 km radius. Based on an evaluation of data in the study, the number of cancer cases attributable to the 16 nuclear plants would rise from 29 (the number of "excess cases" within the 5 km radius) to at least 121 to 275. The relative increase in leukaemia cases attributable to the nuclear plants studied would be even greater.

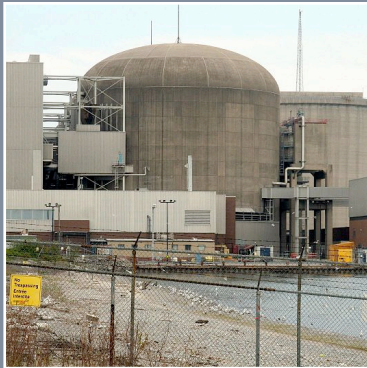
As the study states, current radio-biological and radio-epidemiological knowledge is not able to explain the results. During the study different factors which might explain the results (i.e. confounders) were thoroughly examined, but there were no indications of potential risk factors, other than the proximity to the nuclear power plants.

Editors Note: Heinz-Jurgen Peter's complete report is available at www.nuclearfreealberta.ca



Even before the release of this study, Germany's Green coalition government made the decision for the orderly decommissioning of all of Germany's nuclear power plants by 2020.

ONTARIO POWER GENERATION



Nuclear power projects in Ontario such as those shown above put the provincial government \$38 billion dollars in debt.

If nuclear power comes to Alberta and is used for the extraction of bitumen from the Tar Sands, how long will it be before the Alberta government is compelled to use the public purse to subsidize the nuclear power industry here?

ONTARIO WEARING ECONOMIC BLINDERS WHEN IT COMES TO NUCLEAR, SAYS GREENPEACE REPORT.

Toronto — Investment analysts say the cost of building Dalton McGuinty's nuclear reactors has more than doubled in the last three years but the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) refuses to re-evaluate its original estimates amidst a global financial crisis.

"Shovels aren't even in the ground yet and the cost of McGuinty's \$26 billion nuclear spending spree has already more than doubled," says Shawn-Patrick Stensil, a Greenpeace energy campaigner. "It is irresponsible for Dalton McGuinty to spend up to \$50 billion on nuclear and run a deficit when many Ontarians are worried about their jobs and social security."

Stensil is the author of a new Greenpeace report, "Better Never than Late: The Climate Fall-Out of Ontario's Nuclear Electricity Plan" that also highlights the dangerous and reckless assumptions the OPA made in developing the province's electricity plan. According to the report, the province will miss its greenhouse gas reduction targets and Ontarians will be exposed to increased nuclear risks as the OPA plan relies on gas, coal and running ageing nuclear stations past their retirement dates.

In 2005, the OPA cited the cost of a CANDU-6 at \$2,972/kW, as a conservative cost estimate for new nuclear plants. In May 2008, Moody's Investment Service estimated the capital cost for new reactors at \$7,500/kW.

"Nuclear power is a waste of money that Ontario can't afford when cleaner, cheaper alternatives exist," says Stensil.* "The writing is on the wall, but the McGuinty government and its agencies have routinely attempted to undermine environmental, nuclear safety and economic reviews and silence any opposition."

"The first thing Energy Minister George Smitherman can do to control skyrocketing nuclear costs and protect the environment is to shut down the Pickering B nuclear station early next year and replace it with green. He says he's interested in expanding green power. Here's his chance," said Stensil.

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GreenPeace urges a Green Energy Strategy for Ontario in its latest Public Report

CHICAGO-AREA ELECTORAL VICTORY SAYS 'NO WE WON'T' TO NUKE POWER BY HARVEY WASSERMAN

As the world media filled with the victory of Barack Obama, a defeat for atomic power in his own back yard sent a Solartopian message to the new administration.

In the Chicago-area communities of Oak Park, Berwyn and Riverside, voters approved by well over two-to-one a referendum asking that "our elected officials in Illinois take steps to phase out nuclear power in the state, replacing it with renewable sources such as wind and solar."

The three communities currently rely on atomic power for some 75% of their electricity, which is supplied through Commonwealth Edison, a subsidiary of Exelon, America's largest nuke owner. With 11 operating reactors, Illinois has more reactors than any other state.

But 31,586 (68.3%) voters approved the referendum, versus 14,676 (31.7%) opposed.

Atomic energy will be one of the most critical issues the new administration will face. Obama was criticized by eco-advocates for taking campaign donations from Exelon. Both he and Vice President-elect Joe Biden expressed campaign support for atomic power.

But their stance was moderated by Obama's insistence that atomic power be "safe," and by his ads he ran in Nevada opposing the Yucca Mountain radioactive waste dump. Some 80% of Nevada citizens oppose that project, whose projected cost now runs about \$100 billion.

By contrast, John McCain vehemently advocated the quick construction of some 45 new reactors. He pointed with pride to his own naval service on nuke-powered vessels.

But the issue of how to finance such a "nuclear renaissance" now overshadows all the rhetoric, and will define the technology's future.

A strong lobby with a slick, expensive public relations campaign is now pushing new nukes. New ratepayer-based reactor financing is now being shoved through state public utilities commissions in Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas and possibly elsewhere, with tens of billions in potential liability.

But Wall Street has given thumbs down to a technology that can't compete with Solartopian sources like wind, solar, tidal, geothermal and other green energies.

The future of new reactor construction thus depends on massive federal and state subsidies. In the fall of 2007, the industry inserted into a Congressional energy bill a package of loan guarantees meant to provide \$50 billion in taxpayer-backed funds to build new reactors.

Reactor projects fail about 50% of the time, and such a package could have stuck taxpayers with a massive liability. A national grassroots campaign led in part by NukeFree.org and musicians Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne and Graham Nash helped defeat the package. Not a single major national environmental organization supported the guarantees.

This fall an even larger federal loan plan, offering virtually unlimited funds, was on its way to the US Congress. It could have provided a half-trillion dollars in new taxpayer guarantees to build just the 45 reactors McCain proposed.

But when Wall Street collapsed, the federal bank bailout made the idea of taking on still more huge financial liabilities untenable.

As Barack Obama takes office in January, green power advocates will again argue that along with questions of terror and error, radioactive waste and ecological harm, nuke power is far too expensive to compete with Solartopian green power.

The clock is ticking very fast on the idea of new nukes. With projected construction times of a decade or more, new reactors cannot begin to deliver energy until many years after the installation of competing green sources, whose comparative costs continue to drop.

So this small but strong Chicago-area vote for a Solartopian future sends a very clear message. A powerful new nuke lobby will be pushing hard from Day One of the new administration.

But in today's financial and political climate, atomic energy cannot compete. A green-powered planet is the only one that will sell on both Main Street and Wall Street.

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"IN NUCLEAR WE TRUST?"



Republican President George W. Bush and his party's presidential candidate for 2008, Senator John McCain, are both strong supporters of nuclear energy. President elect - Barack Obama - may place greater demand on the nuclear industry to find a truly effective solution for long-term waste storage before providing any government subsidies to the industry.

CAUSE NEWS BITS...

HELEN CALDICOTT EVENT - A ROUSING SUCCESS.

Our October event 'Nuclear is not the Answer' with Dr. Helen Caldicott was a complete success and truly amazing. She gave two public talks that were attended by approximately 700 people. During Dr. Caldicott's two-day stay in Calgary, the media was very anxious to talk with her about nuclear power and what it would mean for Alberta. Dr. Caldicott was interviewed by City TV's - The Breakfast Show, CFCN Noon News, for a news story on Global TV, an interview with The Calgary Sun, an editorial board meeting with the Calgary Herald and a phone-in event on the CBC Radio program 'Wild Rose Country'.

Thanks to Mountain Equipment Co-op, David Suzuki Foundation, Kathy Czar, Dr. Irma Parhad Programmes and everyone else who helped make this event a complete success!

THE CAUSE NEWSLETTER NEEDS A NAME

By popular demand our newsletter must have a name. Can you think of a catchy and unique name for our little publication? Please submit your name ideas using the newsletter email address: bigbluemarble@canada.com A panel of judges will select the best name among those submitted and the winner will receive a special

prize so get your ideas in by December 31, 2008.

CAUSE CONTINUED TO ATTEND LOCAL FESTIVALS...

...over the Autumn months, meeting people, handing out bumper stickers, a new postcard for MLA's and getting the message out about the proposal for nuclear power in our province. CAUSE was also letting people know about truly sustainable sources of energy that are clean and green and available today.

In keeping with that idea, CAUSE wishes to thank **GOLDEN SHEEP POWER INC.** for generously providing us with display materials related to renewable wind energy and for information about their unique line of wind turbines for residential, industrial and commercial applications. More information at www.goldensheeppowerinc.com

CAUSE attended the ECO-LIVING FAIR at Mount Royal College in September and the Marda Loop Justice Film Festival in November. We can always use your help at events like these and we would like to thank our latest civic activists that came out to the Film Festival. Those people include: Louise, Anna, Esmerelda, & Kevin. Thanks to you all!



If you would like more information about volunteering and civic activism contact CAUSE at the email below: nuclearfreealberta@gmail.com.

CAUSE WISHES ALL ITS MEMBERS, VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORTERS THE HAPPIEST OF HOLIDAYS AND A SAFE, HEALTHY AND NUCLEAR FREE NEWYEAR.



WHAT IS CAUSE?

We are a grass-roots, non-profit, all volunteer group of Alberta citizens dedicated to maintaining our province as a nuclear free zone through active participation in citizen action, public education and advocacy for alternative forms of sustainable energy.

SAVE ENERGY BY:

- Recycling aluminum cans. One recycled can will save enough electricity to run a TV for three hours.
- Use energy efficient compact florescent light bulbs.
- Run your dishwasher, clothes washer and dryer early in the morning or late at night.

CAUSE NEWSLETTER

CONTACT THE EDITOR AT BIGBLUEMARBLE@CANADA.COM

CAUSE WEBSITE: WWW.NUCLEARFREEALBERTA.CA

CONTACT CAUSE AT NUCLEARFREEALBERTA@GMAIL.COM