

Petition on Nuclear Power

The demand for electricity in the US has been growing at the rate of over 20% per decade. During every year of the last decade, nuclear reactors were responsible for generating over 20% of the electricity. In 1998, for example, improved procedures have allowed nuclear reactors to generate 21% of our electrical energy in spite of the decrease in the number of reactors from 112 to 104.

Demand for electricity will continue to grow, not only because of our increasing population, but also because of our new types of demands — the growth of the computer and Internet industries and the mandated use of electric vehicles, to name but two.

As scientists and engineers, we are concerned that since 1980, while demand for electricity has soared by 40%, there have been neither any new orders for nuclear power plants, nor any construction permits issued. We believe that utilities and investors have been driven away from nuclear power primarily because they fear, correctly or incorrectly, that capricious regulation can wipe out their investment over night.

While the US was once the undisputed leader in nuclear technology, we are increasingly having to take the back seat to European and Asian countries, where nuclear is alive and well.

The demand for electricity will not abate, nor can we allow production to slacken, lest the entire nation experience shortages even worse than those that have caused California's electricity crisis. By any standard, nuclear power remains the cleanest and safest means of generating electricity, even considering the vast improvements in clean-burning technology for fossil fuels.

All energy carries some degree of risk. To ask for safe energy is to ask for gasoline that doesn't burn. However, by any measure, the most dangerous energy scenario imaginable is simply not having it available. Second in line to that is international conflict over energy supplies. Therefore we must assure that we have reliable energy. We believe that

Renewable energy sources --- wind, hydro, biomass, tides, waves, and geothermal --- can reduce fuel consumption; however, even strong advocates recognize that renewable sources have no chance of providing enough energy to run the country.

The waste management problem is primarily political, not technical. The time has come for this issue no longer to hold hostage the development of nuclear power.

While there is nothing per-se wrong with importing energy supplies, the situation can become very dangerous when we lack the ability to become self-reliant at a moment's notice.

Please bear in mind that we do not seek subsidies for the nuclear industry, because nuclear power should be able to survive the marketplace. We merely encourage rational policies to allow safe and orderly development of nuclear power.

Name _____

Street Address _____

City, State, and Zip _____

Highest degree B.S. ___ M.S. ___ Ph.D. ___

Field _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Please copy at will for colleagues to sign. Please return signed copies to: The Energy Advocate Petition Project, P.O. Box 7595 Pueblo West CO 81007. The petition will be forwarded to President Bush and Vice President Cheney.