

**JunkScience.com**

All the Junk That's Fit to Debunk

## Environmentalists Prompt Nuclear Power Wake-Up Call

Posted on [August 14, 2008](#) | Comments Off

By Steven Milloy

August 14, 2008, [FoxNews.com](#)

What did the nuclear power industry get for playing footsie with the “greens” on global warming? A knife in the back, it looks like. The greens now are saying that emission-free nuclear power may actually contribute to climate change.

After decades of having its growth entirely stymied by anti-nuclear environmentalists, the industry decided to help the greens lobby for global warming regulation in hopes of easing opposition to the expansion of nuclear power. Companies like Exelon, FPL Group and NRG Energy, for example, helped the greens form the U.S. Climate Action Partnership (USCAP) — a coalition of big businesses and green groups that has been leading the charge on Capitol Hill for global warming regulation.

But as the saying goes, when you lie down with dogs, you get up with fleas.

A case in point is the proposed addition of a third reactor at the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant in southern Maryland. The greens formed a group euphemistically called the Chesapeake Safe Energy Coalition (CSEC) to oppose the new reactor. Members of the CSEC are hardcore anti-nuclear activists including the Sierra Club, Public Citizen, Maryland Public Interest Research Group (PIRG), the Maryland Green Party and the Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility.

A June 2007 report by Maryland PIRG lays out the standard anti-nuclear objections against the proposed reactor, including that nuclear plants are expensive to build, radiation is inherently dangerous, uranium mining is environmentally destructive, and that nuclear waste “remains dangerous for thousands of years and no nation on earth has developed an acceptable solution for safely disposing of it.”

But in this era of global warming hysteria, the standard arguments apparently aren't working.

Maryland's Gov. Martin O'Malley — who is well-regarded by environmentalists for consuming and metabolizing the green Kool-Aid on global warming — supports the Calvert Cliffs expansion. O'Malley apparently realizes that Maryland needs the electricity given the fact that the state is facing rolling blackouts on summer days starting as early as 2011. Moreover, nuclear power is emissions-free, another plus for Maryland's warmer-in-chief. His support is even more remarkable since he recently barred the installation of wind turbines on public lands.

The governor's picking nukes over wind must have sent the greens into meltdown. So in response, the desperate greens came up with a bizarre new argument: nuclear power causes global warming.

That's right, nuclear is the latest form of "dirty" energy. How can that be, you ask? Nuclear power doesn't produce greenhouse gases, does it? Well, not directly, the greens argue. But nuclear power "worsens climate change," says prominent environmentalist Amory Lovins in a new paper, because it diverts money away from alternative energy and efficiency efforts that would otherwise reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Adding insult to injury, Lovins also says that nuclear power is "grossly uncompetitive, unneeded and obsolete" and "weakens electric reliability and national security."

The head of Maryland PIRG picked up on Lovins' line of thinking, telling Carbon Control News (Aug. 🤖) that "efficiency programs and renewables such as wind and solar can provide more carbon-abatement per dollar while avoiding the downsides of nuclear power."

The movement to block the Calvert Cliffs plant also has an international component. Greenpeace has taken its anti-nuclear jihad to Flamanville, Finland, where a private utility company is currently building a European Pressurized Reactor (EPR) — a safer, more reliable and cheaper next-generation reactor. But Greenpeace has alleged technical and safety problems with the EPR and misconduct in the Finns' safety approval process. Though the Finnish regulatory authority has rejected the misconduct claims, it nevertheless announced that it plans further studies on the EPR's safety.

This, of course, has delighted the opponents of the Calvert Cliffs expansion since the reactor that has been proposed to be built is an EPR.

And the greens aren't just going after the Calvert Cliffs plant, they are turning their sights on the entire nuclear industry. No doubt this is a direct result of the industry's effort to expand in the wake of global warming hysteria, which has taken the form of more than 20 applications to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Agency for new plant licenses.

Lovins claims "the nuclear industry's sales pitch is false" and that "the supposed nuclear revival is a carefully manufactured illusion that seeks to become a self-fulfilling prophecy." The Natural Resources Defense Council has a "fact sheet" on its web site entitled "New Nuclear Power Plants Are Not a Solution for America's Energy Needs."

Environmental Defense ominously intones on its web site that, "Serious questions of safety, security, waste and proliferation surround the issue of nuclear power. Until these questions are resolved satisfactorily, Environmental Defense cannot support an expansion of nuclear generating capacity."

The World Resources Institute says, "And while it can be argued that the actual risks of nuclear power are far lower than the perceived risks, and that coal-fired power plants have killed a far greater number of people than nuclear energy, most communities do not want nuclear plants nearby."

While the nuclear industry has no reason to expect better treatment from activists like Lovins, shouldn't it get at least a little friendly lip service from the Natural Resources Defense Council, Environmental

Defense and the World Resources Institute — its lobbying partners in USCAP? Instead, these groups are happy to exploit the influence and resources of the likes of Exelon, FPL Group and NRG Energy to promote global warming regulation, but then feel no compunction about trying to tear down the partners it exploited.

Is the industry OK with such two-facedness? Will anyone complain or drop out of USCAP? We'll see.

Meantime, it's ironic and disturbing that the nuclear industry can figure out how to safely and productively harness the power of the atom, but it can't figure out that lobbying with the enemy is a bad idea.

*Steven Milloy, who publishes JunkScience.com and DemandDebate.com, is an advocate of free enterprise and an adjunct scholar at the Competitive Enterprise Institute.*

This entry was posted in [Nuclear power](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

Comments are closed.

---

*Theme: Coraline by Automattic. Blog at WordPress.com.*