



Give power to the people with nuclear energy option

By Jim Waters

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) — The Senate recently passed legislation lifting the moratorium on nuclear power plants in Kentucky. However, House leaders “nuked” the idea.

Their concerns for not jumping on an energy source that could, along with coal, make Kentucky a national leader in the two cheapest sources of available energy are as dated as the accident at the infamous Chernobyl power plant in the former Soviet Union nearly 25 years ago.

That accident happened because the bureaucrat in charge ignored wise counsel and continued with an experiment that would require reducing to low power – a move the reactor wasn’t designed to handle – and shutting down several safety features. Lower-level supervisors more knowledgeable than the bureaucratic boss tried to dissuade him. But he forged ahead.

People died, not because nuclear power is unsafe, but because of bureaucratic stupidity.

“It’s kind of like the Titanic,” said physicist Steven C. Barrowes of Radcliff, a former researcher at the National Cold Fusion Institute in Salt Lake City. “They weren’t being very smart about what they were doing. They were sailing through areas where icebergs had been seen, yet they were going full speed ahead because they ‘knew’ that the Titanic was unsinkable.”

Like Chernobyl, the Titanic accident resulted from overconfidence.

“Yet, people haven’t said more ocean liners shouldn’t be built because one went down,” Barrowes said. “Quite the contrary. We have plenty of ocean liners because we understood some of the problems. For example, the shell of the Titanic was made out of steel that tended to be brittle rather than ductile so it left a hole rather than a dent.”

Too many lawmakers see the Chernobyl cloud and give place to voices of fear channeled through uninformed tree huggers who go “nuclear” (sorry) whenever economically sound and environmentally safe energy expansion is considered.

That’s what Rep. Rick Rand, D-Bedford, expressed when he pooh-poohed the idea of giving [Senate Bill 26](#) a hearing in his Appropriations and Revenue Committee.

“There is opposition to it,” Rand told reporters. “Many members have expressed concern about the nuclear issue. Not just members, but also people who have environmental concerns.”

Straight talk here demands we properly identify “people who have environmental concerns” as unbalanced environmentalists who want to force everyone back to the family farm with its mule-driven plows and horse-and-buggy transportation to get there.

This all sounds swell until you get out in that horse-and-buggy on a winter day or in that field on a sweltering one. Limiting future energy expansion to windmills and solar power sounds dreamy until the sun sets or the wind quits blowing and our economy suffers a meltdown.

Those who support Kentucky's current moratorium on proceeding with nuclear power oppose it on the basis that the nation doesn't have a centralized storage area for spent fuel. Yet, how is it that other states are moving ahead – with the help of the Obama administration?

Washington has committed \$8.3 billion in loan guarantees to help build two nuclear reactors in Georgia and, according to the New York Times, “restart the American nuclear power industry.”

Advances in technology now make it possible to safely store uranium on site.

This, the Times reported, “makes good sense.

It also makes good dollars and “cents” for Kentucky.

The [Nuclear Energy Institute](#) reported that the 2008 cost to produce one kilowatt hour of electric energy was 1.87 cents for nuclear and 2.75 cents for coal, compared with much higher prices for natural gas (8.09 cents) and oil (17.26 cents).

What doesn't make sense is to allow fear, and the ignorance that powers it, to keep us from plugging into nuclear power and keeping Kentucky's energy costs where they are now: low.

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