

Clean Water for North Carolina

Science-Based Environmental Justice

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CWFNC Resolution on Nuclear Power

Resolution on nuclear power: For the following reasons, the Board of Clean Water for North Carolina has concluded that the construction of additional nuclear power plants is NOT an environmentally, economically or socially acceptable response to the need to reduce carbon emissions in an effort to reduce the effects of climate change:

1. The Principles of Environmental Justice are clear about the unacceptable and disproportionate impacts of toxics and radiation on mostly indigenous people and low income people in North America, Australia and other places by uranium mining and tailings;
2. Nuclear power production requires massive water withdrawals, evaporation and degradation;
3. Siting of nuclear power facilities and plant designs have been driven more by politics and local economics than by safety, geologic stability and other considerations;
4. Nuclear power is not a cost-effective solution; in fact, it would tie up huge amounts of capital which can be more quickly, equitably and safely used for efficiency/conservation and renewable energy;
5. Transportation of nuclear waste will become an even larger and more accident-prone activity as current on-site storage ponds fill up;
6. Even if 4th generation nuclear reactors produce less waste—not a demonstrated fact—they are more than 20 years away. There is no chance of them being in place in time to significantly reduce climate change emissions as urgently as needed;
7. If you include fossil fuel use in mining, fuel processing, transportation, plant construction and waste handling, the carbon footprint of nukes is NOT zero, but is closer to the emissions of a gas fired power plant, thus delaying any “carbon-free” benefits of nuclear generation;
8. The nuclear waste issue has not been solved technologically, and no experience with any human social structure would indicate the stability to be able to handle such waste for tens of thousands of years. The continued presence of these wastes will be an ongoing threat to our health, democracy and transparency;
9. The increase in nuclear materials due to operation of more nuclear power plants would undermine all efforts to increase nuclear security and prevent proliferation.

As a result of these considerations, Clean Water for North Carolina opposes the siting, construction and operation of new nuclear power facilities, and calls for the rapid reduction in power demand by efficiency and conservation, as well as replacement by safe, non-hazardous, non-water intensive, non-carbon sources.

