

October 27, 2011

Energy, Environment & Technology  
Legislative Interim Committee

Senator Curt McKenzie, Co-Chair  
Representative George Eskridge, Co-Chair

Dear Committee:

Thank you for your commitment to Idaho's energy future by updating the 2007 Idaho Energy Plan. And, thank you for allowing citizen input.

I have appreciated the 11 years that I spent in the Idaho Senate and House. I am grateful to have been a member of the Energy, Environment & Technology Committee and having helped with that committee make the Idaho Energy Plan a reality.

For the past five years, I have chaired the Energy, Natural Resources & Agriculture Policy Committee for the National Foundation for Women Legislators (NFWL), and I am proud of the role our committee has played in shaping energy policy nationally, as well as educating women elected officials throughout the nation. NFWL is home to many women elected officials as well as legislators. I can testify that the nuclear renaissance, nationally, is real.

I would like to recommend that you look closely at the laws and expand the opportunities for Idaho to be a leader in clean energy choices, especially in the area of nuclear energy.

My NFWL committee previously passed three significant resolutions with no dissenting votes that made a difference we feel, especially in the nuclear energy arena. One encouraged the use of nuclear energy in our National Energy Policy, one on the importance of offering a balanced portfolio of energy choices to include nuclear, and one on encouraging Congress and the Administration to include new nuclear plants in the DOE Loan Guarantee program. Previous rules and regulations did not allow nuclear plants to be included in that program. In December, 2007, President Bush signed the fiscal 2008 budget that implemented the Loan Guarantee program and it does include new nuclear plants.

According to Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI), many states have made significant progress in this fight for clean energy with nuclear. The Kansas House of Representatives passed property tax exemptions for new nuclear reactors. The Florida Public Service Commission passed cost-recovery rules to help finance new nuclear plants. The Louisiana and South Carolina legislatures approved cost recovery measures for new nuclear plant construction. The Texas legislature passed two bills that encourage new-plant construction.

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Ann Rydalch Recommendations

The North Carolina governor signed legislation that enables the state's utility commission to approve nuclear or coal plant project costs before construction begins. And just last year, the Iowa House passed positive nuclear energy legislation and it is expected to pass the Senate this year.

There are economic benefits in the nuclear industry as well. NEI estimates an average nuclear plant generates \$430M in sales of goods and services in a community; plus \$40M in total labor income; plus \$20M in state and local tax revenue; plus supplies such as thousands and thousands of nuclear-grade valves, thousands of pumps, thousands of miles of cable, millions and millions cubic yards of concrete and thousands of electrical components.

Internationally, nuclear energy is escalating as well in various areas. NRG Energy Inc., has partnered with Toshiba Corp., to create a company to pursue new nuclear energy projects. London-based Guinness Asset Management is launching a global energy fund to capitalize on rising energy costs and the end of cheap oil, and will invest in companies involved in the exploration, production and distribution of energy including oil, natural gas, nuclear and alternative sources such as wind and wave power. The U. S. and Bahrain, (a place which NFWL leaders have visited), signed a memorandum for peaceful nuclear energy cooperation in 2008, setting out the agreement as a model for the responsible pursuit of the benefits of nuclear technology. United Arab Emirates (USE) will establish a Nuclear Energy Implementation Organization, budgeting \$102M for the organization, which will implement a peaceful nuclear energy program according to IAEA.

Yes, the process in building nuclear reactors is costly and time consuming. But there are opportunities now, because of new technologies, to build the Small Modular Reactor (SMR) for example. According to the DOE Deputy Assistance Secretary for Fuel Cycle Technology who spoke at my last committee meeting in August 2011, this technology is ready. And, at that same committee meeting, a well established energy company in the mid-west, with ties to Idaho, is very interested in the potential for building SMRs throughout the nation. The INL is well acquainted with the SMR as well. We must always make sure our laws do not impede the chance for new technology.

Idaho was the first state to light a town with nuclear power. Idaho can continue to be a leader in this fight for clean energy and can do it with nuclear power. Please consider these suggestions and additional ways to expand and enhance nuclear energy in our Idaho Energy Plan.

Sincerely,

Ann Rydalch

State Senator, 1983-1990

State Representative, 2002-2006