



Boxer-Kerry Climate Bill Greenwashes Nuclear Power

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Bowing to pressure from the pro-nuclear lobby, Senators Boxer and Kerry have included nuclear power into their bill to address climate change. In their proposed legislation, the Senators claim that "nuclear energy is the largest provider of clean, low-carbon, electricity...." Funny we've heard that before. In fact, the bill's nuclear section reads like it was lifted off the Nuclear Energy Institute's (NEI) website, despite its lack of veracity.

Over a decade ago, environmentalists challenged the nuclear industry's propaganda that they were clean and green. As a result, the Better Business Bureau's (BBB) National Advertising Division [found that the Nuclear Energy Institute's ads falsely claimed](#) that nuclear reactors make power without polluting the air and water or damaging the environment. The BBB said that, "The nuclear industry should stop calling itself 'environmentally clean' and should stop saying it makes power 'without polluting the environment.'" The director of the division said such claims were "unsupportable." The bureau agreed with environmentalists that nuclear fuel is made using electricity from coal plants and that nuclear waste poses a threat to the public health and safety.

The nuclear industry's brazen disregard for the BBB prompted the environmental groups to bring NEI before the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The FTC found that

[B]ecause the discharge of hot water from cooling systems is known to harm the environment, and given the unresolved issues surrounding disposal of radioactive waste, we think that NEI has failed to substantiate its general environmental benefit claim.

Unfortunately those same false claims have now found their way into the legislation offered by Senator's Boxer and Kerry.

Even Andrew Kadak, "Professor of the Practice" at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), [has acknowledged that nuclear power contributes CO2](#) to the environment. In a speech before the American Physical Society entitled "A Renaissance for

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Nuclear Energy?" Kadak bemoaned the fact that the international community had already rejected nuclear power as a solution to climate change. However, Kadak recognized that:

For many years, nuclear energy, while arguably a -CO2 emitting energy source, has been judged to be unacceptable for reasons of safety, unstable regulatory climate, a lack of a waste disposal solution and, more recently, economics.

If the Senators actually want to abate climate change rather than merely enriching nuclear corporations, we need solutions that are fast, safe and affordable, and that rules out nuclear power. The [Congressional Budget Office has already determined](#) that the risk of default on the nuclear loan guarantees congress will supply to the nuclear industry is well above 50%. Is it really the Senator's intent to support the next taxpayer bailout?

Mid American, a subsidiary of Warren Buffet's Berkshire Hathaway, [has already conducted their economic due diligence on a new nuclear plant](#) and determined that it does not make economic sense to build. If the "world's greatest investor" will not waste his resources on new nuclear power, perhaps the Senate should listen.

But Warren Buffet's corporation isn't the only one who thinks nuclear power is an economic non-starter. In April, Jon Wellinghoff, the chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, [stated that new nuclear and coal plants are not needed](#). Renewable energy like wind & solar and improvements in energy efficiency will provide enough energy to meet our future energy demands. Wellinghoff concluded that nuclear and coal plants are too expensive.

In June, Moody's Investor Services [released their analysis of new nuclear generation](#) and determined that nuclear power was a "bet the farm" risk. Why should the American taxpayer be expected to support such an investment?

The history of nuclear power plant cost overruns that led Forbes magazine to call nuclear power the ["largest managerial disaster in business history"](#) is repeating itself with the current generation of nuclear reactors. Last month, the French nuclear giant, Areva announced that they had lost 550 million euros, a 79% drop in their profits, due to construction delays with their reactor in Finland. According to Areva, [the 3-billion euro nuclear plant](#) has now accumulated 2.3 billion euros in estimated losses. Does the Senate really want to repeat this fiscal fiasco in the U.S.?

Nuclear power is a deadly and dangerous distraction from real solutions to climate change and our energy needs. Nuclear power is unsafe, uneconomical & unnecessary. Rather than greenwashing nuclear power, Senators Boxer and Kerry should cut the nuclear title from their bill and work to oppose any attempts to support this failed experiment.

Jim Riccio, Nuclear Policy Analyst

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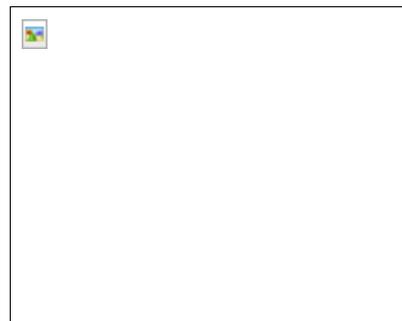
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