



January 2008

Assembly Committee on Energy and Utilities
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707

RE: Please oppose AB 346, Repeal of the Nuclear Moratorium

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Energy and Utilities:

The undersigned organizations urge you to oppose AB 346.

AB 346, relating to repeal of 196.493 which currently limits the construction of nuclear power plants. We believe that 196.493 is a sensible law that protects the environment and ratepayer interests. This law doesn't ban the construction of nuclear plants in Wisconsin. It simply requires that two criteria be met before the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) can authorize the construction of a nuclear plant. These two criteria are that:

1. A waste repository is available for radioactive waste created by Wisconsin reactors, and;
2. A nuclear plant is economically advantageous to ratepayers in comparison to alternatives.

Unless nuclear power can pass these simple requirements, nuclear power plants should not be built in Wisconsin.

In addition, the U.S. Department of Energy was required by law to begin the removal of radioactive waste from Wisconsin's nuclear reactors beginning in 1998ⁱ. To pay for the waste removal, Wisconsin ratepayers have paid a total of \$594 million to the federal government as of March 31, 2006ⁱⁱ. Yet the federal government has failed to build a permanent disposal site for the waste at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. Therefore, the waste hasn't been removed and, in our state, is stored on the shores of the Mississippi River and Lake Michigan. If the nuclear moratorium law is repealed and nuclear plants are built in Wisconsin, even more radioactive waste will be stored in our state, likely near these or other precious water resources, and may never be removed by the federal government.

We also oppose AB 346 because if the federal government doesn't license Yucca Mountain, or radioactive waste continues to be generated at its current pace, a second nuclear repository would be needed, and Wisconsin would be a prime candidateⁱⁱⁱ. In fact, in 1986 the U.S. Department of Energy recommended Wisconsin's Wolf River area as a permanent disposal site for nuclear waste. If the moratorium law is repealed and additional nuclear plants are built in Wisconsin, the federal government will likely look again to the Wolf River as a permanent disposal site for the nation's radioactive waste.

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Finally, nuclear power plants are not the answer to global warming. A recent study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology determined that approximately 1,500 new nuclear reactors would have to be constructed by mid-century to have even a modest impact on the reduction of greenhouse gasses^{iv}. Since all orders for nuclear reactors after 1973 have been cancelled, it's unrealistic to expect that enough nuclear plants can be built to combat global warming^v.

Sincerely,

Citizens Utility Board
League of Women Voters of Wisconsin
Nukewatch
Physicians for Social Responsibility
RENEW Wisconsin
Sierra Club
Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters
Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group



ⁱ Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, September, 2006, [Civilian Nuclear Waste Disposal](#).

ⁱⁱ Eric Callisto, Executive Assistant to the Chairperson, Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, in a presentation to the Legislative Special Committee on Nuclear Power, September, 2006

ⁱⁱⁱ Joseph Strohl, Chairperson, Radioactive Waste Review Board, [High-Level Nuclear Waste: A Wisconsin Perspective](#).

^{iv} "The Future of Nuclear Power: An Interdisciplinary MIT Study." Massachusetts Institute of Technology. 2003.

^v Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, May, 2006, Nuclear Power: [Outlook for New U.S. Reactors](#)