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## **Repeal of Law Restricting Nuclear Construction Would Place Wisconsin at Risk *Assembly Bill 1053 Would Remove Consumer and Safety Protections***

A bill introduced by State Representative Mike Huebsch (R-West Salem) would make it more likely that a federal nuclear waste dump would be sited in Wisconsin, and dramatically increase energy prices for consumers. The bill, AB 1053, would repeal common sense restrictions in a Wisconsin law that prevents nuclear plants from being constructed in the state unless:

- there is a federal repository available to dispose of nuclear waste; and
- the cost to construct and operate a new nuclear plant is economically advantageous for ratepayers.

The Assembly Energy and Utilities Committee is scheduled to take action on the proposal, Wednesday, March 1 at 10 a.m.

State environmental and consumer organizations strongly oppose repeal of Wisconsin's statutory protections against expensive and dangerous nuclear power.

"Construction of new nuclear plants in Wisconsin will be an open invitation to the federal government to site a nuclear waste dump in the Wolf River area," warned Katie Nekola of Clean Wisconsin.

By 2010, the volume of nuclear waste in the U.S. is expected to exceed storage capacity at the still unlicensed nuclear waste dump in Yucca Mountain, Nevada. If new reactors are constructed or if existing reactors are re-licensed, it is certain that the federal government will again investigate the granite underlying the Wolf River area as a permanent storage site for the nation's nuclear waste, as it did in the 1980s. Nuclear power plants generate a waste that is so toxic that it must be isolated from the environment for thousands of years. More than a half-century after the nuclear power industry began, a solution for high level nuclear waste disposal has still not been found.

"The cost of constructing and operating a new nuclear plant in Wisconsin would be an economic disaster for ratepayers," said Charlie Higley of the Citizens Utility Board.

According to We Energies, which owns the Point Beach nuclear plant near Manitowoc, it would cost more than \$2 billion to build a new 1,000-megawatt nuclear plant. A recent study by the Public Service Commission verified that nuclear power would not be chosen to meet Wisconsin's energy needs at the utility's projected construction costs. Because of the enormous cost and risk of operating nuclear power plants, no new reactors have been ordered in the U.S. since 1978.

Transporting nuclear waste in Wisconsin puts human health and the environment at risk. If the Yucca Mountain, Nevada federal dump opens, radioactive waste will be shipped through Wisconsin communities, including Milwaukee, Beloit, Sheboygan, Green Bay and LaCrosse. The federal Department of Energy (DOE) estimates that there will be more than 100,000 shipments of nuclear waste nation-wide over 38 years. During this time span the DOE estimates that there will be 66 truck accidents and 10 rail accidents. Independent transportation experts estimate even higher numbers. Increasing the amount of nuclear waste means increasing the potential for serious nuclear waste transportation accidents in Wisconsin communities and rural areas.

“Nuclear power is a dangerous, costly and outdated way of producing electricity. We can do better. Clean energy is safer, cheaper and quicker than all other sources. Nuclear power cannot compete with efficient or renewable energy alternatives, even with massive tax handouts,” said Nekola. “We urge members of the legislature to vote “no” to AB 1053.”

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