

10118 – 115 Ave.  
Peace River, AB  
T8S 1L9  
June 6, 2007

Dear Editor:

Before jumping on the nuclear bandwagon and endorsing a nuclear power plant for the Peace River area, citizens and politicians need to give careful thought to several issues.

Although the technology for producing power by nuclear means has improved dramatically, no one has invented a way for radioactive wastes to stop generating radiation for tens of thousands of years to come. As well, Energy Alberta, which is proposing a nuclear plant for Peace River, has explicitly stated that the wastes from such a plant would be stored on site.

Although accidents due to poor technology and human error may be less likely than they were in the days of the Chernobyl disaster in the Ukraine, there is no such thing as a nuclear plant with no chance of accident. As well, accidents due to extreme weather events have become more likely due to global warming. A nuclear plant could also become a target for terrorists due to the catastrophic damage it could cause.

Area residents would do well to remember that we have had earthquake activity in this region. The hills around the Peace River are notoriously unstable, with big chunks of them falling into the valley on a regular basis. If a nuclear plant were to be placed on one of these hills, how can we be sure the ground would not shift beneath it?

There is also a high financial cost to a nuclear power plant. Even if private industry is able to raise all the billions of dollars needed for the initial investment, there are costs of storing nuclear wastes and maintaining a decommissioned plant that will be passed on to our descendants for thousands of years to come. The cost of any nuclear accident would also be picked up by the taxpayer since insurance to adequately address this need is simply unavailable.

I understand that people want to see economic development in the Peace River area after many years of relative stagnation. However, development is now occurring at a rapid pace even without a nuclear plant. It is occurring so fast that housing, infrastructure and human services are hard pressed to keep up. Why are we hurrying to get all our resources out of the ground? Most of them are bound for export to the United States and will contribute to the ongoing problem of global warming caused by greenhouse gas emissions.

(con'd)

A spokesman for Energy Alberta has stated that a nuclear power plant in the Peace River area would be used primarily to fuel oil sands production and not to provide power to local homes and businesses. This really gives the lie to the notion that nuclear power will help us reduce the production of greenhouse gasses.

An Energy Alberta spokesman has also stated that a nuclear power plant will not be built where it is not wanted. That is good news. Several people have said to me that they will leave our beautiful valley if a nuclear power plant is constructed here.

Let's take some time to think this over and explore all the alternatives.

Brenda Brochu  
President  
Peace River Environmental Society  
(780) 624-1533 (h)  
(780) 624-3466 (w)