

COMMENTS TO U.S. DEPT. OF ENERGY ON NATIONAL ENERGY STRATEGY

by David A. Kraft, Director

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My name is David A. Kraft. I am Director of Nuclear Energy Information Service of Evanston, Illinois, whom I represent today. I am here to provide comments on the National Energy Strategy proposed by the Administration on behalf of the 700 members and the Board of NEIS.

In 1991, after soliciting public comments for a year to develop the National Energy Tragedy of George Bush I, Deputy Secretary of Energy Henson Moore, reported: "Energy efficiency and renewables are basically the cleanest, cheapest, and safest means of meeting our growing energy needs in the 1990s and beyond."

NEIS agrees with the Deputy Secretary, and therefore calls on DOE to support continued and expanded funding for the following programs: Building Equipment and Materials; Commercial Buildings Integration; Community Energy Program; Energy Star Program; Residential Buildings Integration; State Energy Program; Weatherization Assistance Program; DUET; FEMP; Enabling Technologies; Financial Assistance; Industrial Technology Assistance; Vision Industries; BioPower; Distributed Energy Resources; Geothermal Energy; High Temperature Superconductivity; Hydrogen; Hydropower; International Programs; Solar Technologies; Wind Energy; Advanced Combustion Engine R&D; Biofuels; Electric Vehicles R&D; Fuel Cell R&D; Fuels Utilization R&D; Heavy Vehicle Systems R&D; Hybrid Systems R&D; Materials Technologies; Transportation Technology Assistance.

NEIS also advises that the DOE:

- solve the regulatory and standards issues the NEP claims are barriers to increased use of "distributed energy", as mentioned in Sec. 6, page 10. We question why it is preferable to challenge constitutionally guaranteed rights to private property through use of eminent domain to "fast-track" siting transmission lines -- as the President advocates -- as opposed to solving these paper regulation and standards problems. The NEP calls for "streamlining" regulations elsewhere, and often; we cannot understand the discriminatory and embarrassingly obvious omission of distributed generation in this regard, given the positive and desirable results the NEP claims for it. We recommend taking funding from the "clean coal" programs to achieve this result of harmonized regulations and standards, should additional funding be required.
- research and publicize the multiple health, environmental and economic benefits accruing from improved vehicle fleet mileage standards, and perform cost/benefit comparisons with the supply-side methods advocated by the Administration in the NEP, using benchmarks of 40 mpg by the year 2010, and 65 mpg by the year 2020;
- implement study into the costs savings accrued from aggressive expansion of efficiency and renewables compared to nuclear power in the areas of BOTH air quality enhancement, AND nuclear weapons and materials proliferation, using a target of 20% renewable energy generation by the year 2020 as a standard.

Having satisfied your very specific requests for comment, NEIS now asks that you deliver the following message to the Administration.

After ignoring the advice of Deputy Secretary Henson and the overwhelming majority of those who provided testimony and comments in 1990-91, George I then went on to propose an energy strategy that called for drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; more nuclear power; more oil and gas exploration; so-called "clean coal" technology; ignoring better vehicle fleet mileage; eliminating tax breaks for renewables and some energy efficiency; and ignoring the threat of global warming.

Ten years and one failed energy war in the Persian Gulf later, George II is calling for exactly the same things. Only this time the energy war is being waged AGAINST the American people and the environment.

The environmental community is incensed that the highest officials of the most powerful nation on earth are hell bent to repeat the same energy policy mistakes that have resulted in decades of environmental degradation. While it is amply clear that the Administration wishes to live in the past, it is equally clear that it has no interest or ability to learn its lessons.

And so the Administration proposes this joke of an energy policy which:

- gathers its justification in the disingenuous, opportunistic use of the California energy crisis and other national energy problems to promote failed and highly polluting policies of extraction and production, policies which often having little or nothing to do with solving the problems we face;
- was written by an energy "advisory team" consisting of 62 people, 52 of whom have present or past direct affiliation with the fossil fuel (36) or nuclear power (20) industry; who contributed a total of more than \$8 million to Republican candidates in 1999-2000; and only one of whom has primary expertise in energy efficiency, none in renewables;
- is promoted and overseen by an Energy Secretary whose prior chief claim to energy expertise was twice advocating the elimination of the Dept. of Energy;
- calls for more energy production from coal, gas and nuclear power to combat our nation's energy "crisis" and shortage, while the Administration proposes an energy budget that would slash energy efficiency R&D programs by over 30%; and renewable energy R&D programs by \$136 million -- nearly 50% in some cases;
- boasts about the many items it contains that allegedly promote energy efficiency and renewables; yet fails to even include these terms in its Glossary.

The Administration insults the intelligence of the American people first by proposing such a monstrous leap "forward -- into the past;" and secondly for believing that self-serving dog and pony shows like these will satisfy its requirements at public participation.

We object to the lack of visible advance public notice and woefully short timeline to prepare comments for this hearing; we will not be so tolerant of such oversight in the future.

We demand that all the other energy sources mentioned in the NEP and supported so vocally by the Administration -- expanded nuclear power, nuclear fusion, so-called "clean coal" technologies, drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, etc. -- undergo the same line of questioning and justification and public meetings for their continued funding before receiving a single cent of DOE R&D money; and that if they fail to meet the standards for justification that you are requiring for EE/RE programs, they be immediately terminated. In conclusion we would like to point out the results of a June 5th ABC poll on energy production which indicates the following trends:

"In terms of production, eight in 10 also strongly support the development of more solar and wind power. But strong support falls off sharply for some of the proposals President Bush has made -- more oil and gas drilling (49 percent), more coal mining (33 percent) and more nuclear power (29 percent).

"Support 'strongly': More fuel-efficient vehicles, 81%; More solar/wind power, 80%; More conservation by businesses, 79%; More conservation by consumers, 78%; More oil/gas drilling, 49%; More coal mining, 33%; More nuclear plants, 29%."

If it is the United States that the President wishes to govern, it would be advisable that he listen to the people of that land. To fail to do so could have disastrous consequences for the environment and the public health and welfare. It will also guarantee similar political consequences for the President. Thank you. We are available for questions, should you have them.