



July 29, 2010

**Re: Nuke Option too costly: report (Saskatchewan Star Phoenix July 28)**

Dear Editor:

Saskatchewan people deserve a more balanced account of the cost and benefits of nuclear power than that laid out by Heath Packman for the Saskatchewan office of Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Mr. Packman's source notes clearly indicate that he limited his research to work by those who consistently oppose nuclear power. Dozens of credible academic studies that challenge Mr. Packman's conclusions are available to anyone with an internet connection.

Indeed, some of today's leading thinkers on climate change would be astounded to read Packman's conclusion that a nuclear power plant would provide little to no reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Leading British environmentalist and former anti-nuclear activist Mark Lynas caused quite a stir two years ago when he argued large-scale nuclear power was the only way industrial countries could reduce greenhouse gas emissions to the extent needed to slow climate change. Others who argue for action on climate change have come to the same conclusion.

In China where air quality is a subject of daily concern, 23 nuclear reactors are under construction and many more are expected to be built in the coming years. In a country with ample coal supplies, nuclear is embraced as the best clean-air energy alternative.

Closer to home, Mr. Packman seems to have ignored a 2008 study by the Canadian Energy Research Institute (CERI) which compared life cycle emissions of all kinds from Ontario's power facilities. It found that Ontario's nuclear plants emit just 1.8 grams of carbon dioxide per kilowatt hour compared to 540 grams for natural gas plants and 1,050 grams for coal-fired plants.

The cumulative difference is huge. Today, Canada saves about 90 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year through generation of clean nuclear electricity.

As for future costs, every new generating facility or transmission line that is built is more expensive than legacy infrastructure. But no credible study sees the addition of a single nuclear plant to a utility causing a system-wide tripling of rates as Mr. Packman concludes.

Such well-respected independent research entities as Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Energy Information Administration of the US Department of Energy have recently released studies on the levelized costs of competing generating technologies. Levelized cost factors in all inputs, not just capital cost, over the life of a facility, including decommissioning. Study after study shows new nuclear power plants can deliver kilowatts at a cost similar to that of a large, new hydro plant or any future coal plant fitted with carbon capture technology.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Packman told the Regina Leader Post that he is not ideologically for or against nuclear power. Yet, on his acknowledgement page, he thanks his former colleague Peter Prebble for “his helpful guidance.”

It is unfortunate that your reporter failed to notice that Saskatchewan’s leading anti-nuclear campaigner had a role in shaping this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise Carpenter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Denise Carpenter  
President and CEO  
Canadian Nuclear Association  
Ottawa