

Metroland - Simcoe Division

Anti-nuclear letter contained errors

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Re: There are alternatives to spending taxpayers' money on nuclear power, letter to the editor, Huntsville Forester, April 15.

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There are a significant number of factual errors in Matt Richter's letter outlining alternatives to nuclear power.

Mr. Richter claims that Germany produces enough wind-generated electricity to meet all of Ontario's needs. This is incorrect. According to the German Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), Germany possessed a total of 22,247 MW of wind generation at the end of 2007. At a typical 20 per cent capacity factor this would produce an average annual total of about 40 TWh of electricity, much less than Ontario's annual consumption of approximately 160 TWh.

With respect to solar thermal, Mr. Richter claims that it is similar to nuclear power except that it does not use uranium. Unfortunately, unlike nuclear power, solar thermal also does not produce electricity; it only produces hot water for direct application.

Mr. Richter mentions hydro and tidal generation in passing. He neglects to mention that all of Ontario's technically feasible, readily accessible significant hydraulic resources are already in use. Moreover, Ontario has no seacoasts, thus making the harnessing of tidal energy rather difficult.

Mr. Richter also includes biomass, specifically manure through digesters as a source of energy. He neglects to mention that much of this is already in use as fertilizer and thus unavailable for power generation even if it existed in anywhere near the quantity required for base load power generation in Ontario.

Mr. Richter suggests that conservation could play a larger role, noting that Ontario's residents consume 40 per cent more electricity than those of New York State. Mr. Richter fails to acknowledge that Ontario has mining and refining, forestry, steel smelting and automotive manufacturing industries, which New York does not have, making such comparisons meaningless. He also neglects to mention that the Ontario government and Ontario Power Authority already have a large component of conservation built into Ontario's electricity supply strategy.

Colin Hunt

Director of Research and Publications

Canadian Nuclear Association