



June 2, 2027

Amy Austin, Sr. Science Advisor, &
Harshil Varm, Director of Safety & Systems
Atomic Garage Movement
1628 Blue Star Hwy
Algonquin, MI 49419

Re: TES's nuclear energy policy position

Dear Amy and Harshil:

Thank you for your letter dated May 6, 2023, to the Terrestrial Ecology Society (TES) on behalf of 8,367 people petitioning us to reconsider our support of nuclear energy. On behalf of our Board of Directors and our 1.5 million dues-paying members in 130 countries, our policy shall remain to utilize renewable energy to replace fossil fuels and advocate against nuclear energy use. We realize that many people have perceived nuclear energy more favorably over the last several years. But as happened in the past, the next nuclear accident, or when new untested reactors start to be built near population centers, that support will meet reality. The only way to save the planet from the rapidly approaching climate catastrophe is to transition from fossil fuels and uranium to renewable energy sources as quickly as possible.

Nuclear fuel is not renewable. TES and most countries do not consider nuclear energy to be renewable. And we're working to reverse that designation for uranium where it has been adopted. The nuclear industry only uses 1 to 7 percent of the energy in uranium before it has to be extracted from the reactor. At that point, 100 percent of it will be dangerously radioactive for centuries. Estimates by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) show we'll deplete our uranium reserves by the end of the

century.¹ As I say in my public presentations, “You’ve got to dig up a lot of uranium ore to get a meaningful jolt, and from any perspective, there is not a hell-of-a-lot of it left.” As we correspond, the nuclear industry is experiencing delays in starting test reactors because of a shortage of High Assay Low Enriched Uranium (HALEU),² making “new nuclear” a new non-starter.

Nuclear plants are too expensive to build. Although we agree that our interests seem aligned regarding a desire to decarbonize the atmosphere and eradicate energy poverty, the means to accomplish that do not include nuclear energy. Leaking, brittle, decades-old nuclear plants are now operating past their useful lives. Vogtle unit 3 and 4 reactors in Georgia that came online in 2023 cost \$33 billion—that’s \$17 billion over the original budget, and we were seven years behind schedule.³ No new large nuclear plants are being planned or under construction in the United States now because of the expense of doing so.

The waste problem still exists. As of 2027, only 5 percent of nuclear waste has been shipped to underserved communities as part of the Department of Energy’s (DOE) “pay to play scheme” (AKA consent-based siting program). Radioactive waste casks are being temporarily (how long is temporary?) moved from nuclear power plant sites primarily to Native American Reservations that need the bribe money. The prospect of recycling that radioactive material in new reactors is a pipe dream in small laboratory hot cells or on hypothetical slide shows at nuclear industry association meetings.

New nuclear reactors are primarily theoretical. Like the ones mentioned in your letter, they require HALEU enriched to 20 percent. That is an arbitrary enrichment level to allow for neutron efficiency within the reactor core. However, the ability to go from 20 percent enrichment to weapons grade at 95 percent is within the capability of most countries to achieve. And new nuclear reactors will be too small to make any difference in achieving energy equity. But they will be effective at producing plutonium, which is highly desirable for building nuclear weapons.

In summary, nuclear energy has too much catastrophic potential to accept any level of risk of using it for any reason. Let us instead work together to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

Let’s have a meaningful debate about something real. Rather than categorically explain why nuclear energy is a non-starter in achieving our shared vision of decarbonizing our atmosphere and eradicating

¹ IAEA - Vienna, *Analysis of Uranium Supply to 2100*. (updated 2025)

² Global American Business Institute, *Fueling the Next Generation of Reactors: Shortage of HALEU* (2026)

³ Amy, Jeff. AP, *Georgia nuclear rebirth arrives 7 years late, \$17B over cost*. (2023)

energy poverty, TES proposes a debate. Our spokesperson and Co-Chairman, Josh Manning, grandson of our co-founder, Elizabeth O'Brian (Lizzy), would be open to publicly debating the fate of the North Rocky Point Nuclear Power Station next month. Josh would argue for its closure. He said he is willing to have this debate with anyone of your choosing in the parking lot of the local nuclear plant. A nearby location is also acceptable if the plant is a security or safety concern. We feel a public airing of the issues would underscore the importance of closing down this nuclear plant. The facts are clearly on our side. But let's see what the public thinks. If you believe your convictions have substance, let's put them in the spotlight of public discourse on one of the most critical issues of our time. Let me know your decision in the next several days.

Sincerely,



Carson McMullen

Executive Director, TES

copy. 1.5 million members and the international media