



Lamont, Veto Bill Calling for More Dangerous Nuclear Power

What folly! Just as a dam necessary for cooling nuclear waste at Europe's biggest nuclear power complex is blown up, members of the Connecticut legislature pass a bill that includes promotion of dangerous outmoded nuclear power. Senate Bill 7 creates a "Council for Advancing Nuclear Energy Development" specifically packed with six positions for people who work in the nuclear energy industry. Their mission will be to discuss "advancements that are occurring in nuclear energy development". They'll study "small modular reactors, advanced nuclear reactors, [and] fusion energy facilities."

Rather than seek "advancement" we should be figuring out to do a **phase-out this technology**. We see by the Ukraine example that parties at war do not respect what one would think would be totally obvious, the need to do nothing to harm the safety of nuclear power plants. Not that we expect warfare to break out in the U.S., but this country should lead in best practices so that countries where war is a lot more likely won't go down the nuclear path and risk huge releases of nuclear contamination that spread world-wide. Realize that the Chernobyl disaster of 1986 led to thousands of fatalities. In Ukraine alone 35,000 women have received compensation for spouses who died because of the disaster. And that's only the numbers from Ukraine. High levels of radiation covered southern Belarus too, but the government there has never released its statistics.

Another section of the Connecticut bill would classify nuclear as a "Class 1 renewable energy source". That would allow the owner of a new nuclear facility to sell renewable "energy credits", another dubious idea. Rather than limit the use of polluting fuels the idea is for "the market" to take care of things. Grand, rely on the same market whose mindless profit seeking got us hooked on fossil fuels in the first place.

The new council will study ways to "promote nuclear energy development, expansion and research" in Connecticut. **What won't be studied is the problem of importation of Russian uranium** that is used to generate nuclear power. Every year hundreds of millions of dollars are

spent by U.S. companies to buy raw and enriched uranium from Russia. Presumably Connecticut nuclear power companies are no different. Reuters reports that the U.S. power industry relies on Russia and its allies Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan for roughly half of the uranium powering its nuclear power plants. Why not respond to a petition about this and study how to stop relying on a fuel that enriches the Russian dictator?

On May 19 the Mirror published Mary Ellen Spiegel's piece headlined, "Advocates searching for any kind of legislative win on environment." Obviously, some things moved forward this session, but is there anything that's going to have a major impact on the immense problem of our climate emergency? On June 6 it was noted that last month carbon dioxide levels measured at the federal government's Mauna Loa Atmospheric Baseline Observatory in Hawaii reached concentrations of 424 parts per million. That's far, far higher than the 350 ppm that climate scientists believe necessary for long term functioning of human civilization. Sure, it was probably at 424 ppm before, but that was 4 million years ago!

The legislature couldn't even manage the low-hanging fruit of doing something about the ear splitting, smelly, global-warming exhaust from off-road small gas engines, mainly used for lawncare. **We burn 40 million gallons of gas in this state each year just to make lawns and fields look like 18th century English manor houses.** There was a section of S.B. 1145 that would have provided \$10 million in incentives for people in the state to buy electric powered lawn equipment. It was completely pro-business. It didn't even require a trade-in of an old gas guzzler. Yet the language was stripped out of 1145, before the whole bill was killed. Too costly?

But the legislature could manage voting \$460 million a year in permanent tax cuts. Just what we need, ever more buying, more excess, more plastic. And all the while the planet's climates grow more and more unstable and less human friendly.

Governor Lamont should veto SB 7. Then call a special session to pass a revised SB 7 clean of plans for more nuclear power. After doing that stay in session and spend time passing blockbuster legislation that will provide leadership for a country teetering on a climate precipice.

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