

July 10, 2010

The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
United States Senate  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Boxer,

We want to first thank you for your leadership and commitment to addressing the most serious environmental problem now facing us—the climate crisis—and for your continued and justified skepticism toward nuclear power as a solution to our climate problem.

As you know, the Senate is likely to take up climate and/or energy legislation shortly after the July 4<sup>th</sup> recess.

We are writing with a sense of alarm about some bills and proposals we have seen that may be considered by the Senate.

In particular, the American Power Act proposal from Sens. Kerry and Lieberman would provide an unprecedented and unwarranted level of taxpayer support to nuclear power corporations, and additionally weaken regulatory oversight of nuclear reactors and their construction. If there is one lesson from the BP oil spill, it's that stronger regulation of hazardous technologies is required, not less regulation.

Another proposal, the American Clean Energy Leadership Act (ACELA), which has passed the Senate Energy Committee, contains a provision that would establish a Clean Energy Deployment Administration (CEDA) which could award *unlimited* taxpayer loans for new reactor construction without Congressional oversight.

Neither of these proposals is even remotely acceptable. An analysis by the Union of Concerned Scientists has concluded that each of these proposals could provide taxpayer subsidies to the nuclear industry of \$40 billion to \$140 billion or more ([http://www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/nuclear\\_power/Nuclear-Subsidies-in-APA-and-ACELA.pdf](http://www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/nuclear_power/Nuclear-Subsidies-in-APA-and-ACELA.pdf)). This analysis notes that for the proposed Calvert Cliffs-3 reactor in Maryland, for example, “subsidies to Calvert Cliffs approach private investment in the plant and exceed the market value of the power the plant will produce.”

An analysis by Earth Track for Friends of the Earth found that the tax provisions alone in the American Power Act would be worth \$1 to \$3 billion per reactor (<http://www.foe.org/sites/default/files/MoreKerryLiebermanNukeGiveaways.pdf>).

And a lengthy analysis of the nuclear Title of the American Power Act proposal by Physicians for Social Responsibility provides great detail about the many regulatory problems and unwarranted subsidies this legislation would establish (<http://www.psr.org/resources/apa-nuclear-subtitle-summary.pdf>).

Nuclear power is not a solution to the climate crisis. As a statement signed by more than 850 organizations declares: *"We do not support construction of new nuclear reactors as a means of*

*addressing the climate crisis. Available renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies are faster, cheaper, safer and cleaner strategies for reducing greenhouse emissions than nuclear power." (<http://www.nirs.org/climate/climate.htm>).*

We encourage you, as a longtime champion of clean energy and the environment, to do everything possible to ensure that neither of these proposals passes the Senate as written. In particular, the CEDA provision in the ACELA bill must be modified if it is to be considered, while the Nuclear Title in the American Power Act must be substantially rewritten or eliminated entirely.

Other energy-related legislation, such as separate proposals recently made by Sens. Lugar and Burr, suffers from similar deficiencies and would provide unjustified taxpayer support to the nuclear power industry. In addition, neither these bills nor the ACELA bill address carbon emissions, and thus do not fully address the scale of the problems facing us.

While we support strong climate legislation in principle, the American Power Act's nuclear title is so flawed that we ask you to publicly oppose the entire bill unless it is fundamentally changed.

We also note that the emergency supplemental funding bill recently approved by the House included \$9 billion in new loan guarantee authority for reactor construction. That bill must now be approved by the Senate. We urge you to support and work for any effort to remove this funding from the emergency funding bill. Nuclear reactor loans are clearly not an emergency; have no near-term stimulative effect, since no utility is even scheduled to receive a license before 2012; and are an unwarranted taxpayer subsidy to wealthy nuclear interests at any time.

Thank you very much for your consideration, Senator Boxer.

Sincerely,

**Bonnie Raitt**

**Jackson Browne**

**Graham Nash**

Cc: Bettina Poirier