

Coalition for MN Nuclear



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Dear Members of the Energy Finance and Policy committee,

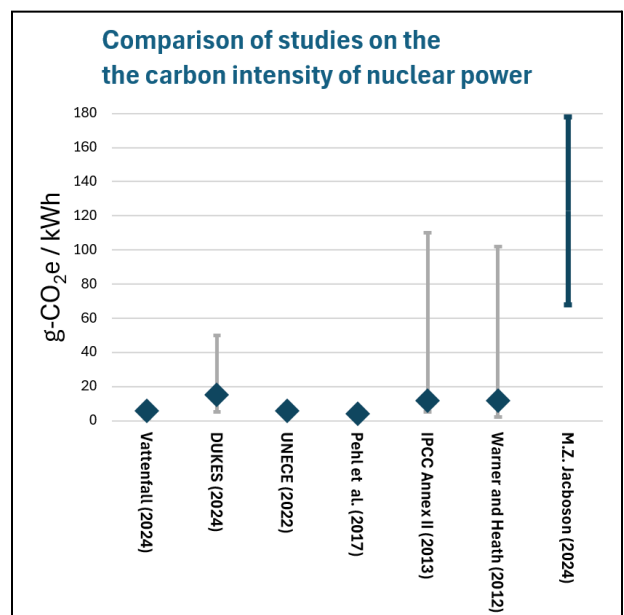


The Coalition for Minnesota Nuclear is a collection of scientists and environmental groups, unions and businesses, experts and other stakeholders, and a member of the Minnesota Nuclear Energy Alliance. Our state faces an unprecedented energy challenge as we work to address the three legs of the energy trilemma - sustainability, reliability, and affordability. We write in strong support of HF 2002.

Nuclear power is low-carbon and environmentally responsible, with the lowest material inputs and land impacts of any existing electrical generating source. When and where it is deployed as part of a diverse generating portfolio, it serves to increase the resiliency of the grid and stabilize prices for ratepayers. Lifting Minnesota's nuclear moratorium will not result in the immediate construction of any new plants, nor serve to bypass or exempt nuclear power from any existing regulatory or administrative review. It will merely allow this proven technology to be included for consideration by utilities, policy makers, and other stakeholders as they seek to meet growing energy demands while maintaining historical reliability and achieve a zero-carbon grid in the next decades.

Carbon Intensity: Correcting the Record

The electricity generated by modern nuclear power plants has been among the lowest climate carbon emissions of any existing energy source. While many different studies exist, with different assumptions of inputs, technologies, historical time frames, and reactor lifetimes, the scientific consensus is clear — the total lifetime embedded climate impact of modern nuclear power is on par



Sources and citations for the above is available on request.



with other renewable sources. It is for this reason that Minnesota lawmakers correctly labeled it as carbon-free, and included it as a necessary technology to meet our state's zero-carbon electricity by 2040 mandate.



Cost, Price, and Value: A False equivalence

While much emphasis is placed on the per kWh cost of individual generating technologies in isolation, the final price of electricity paid by ratepayers is dependent on many additional factors including weather, transmission, fuel, and ancillary systems needed for reliability and backup. When evaluating future investments, all of these factors must be considered in their totality. Nuclear plants provide additional value and unique benefits to grid planners, including the highest reliability, weather independence, and operational lifetimes. In seeking the lowest cost, lowest carbon, and most robust electrical grids, all technology options should be made available to the engineers and policy makers tasked with this challenge.



Letting Regulators regulate and Planners plan

The three existing nuclear reactors in Minnesota currently provide about half of the state's carbon-free generation and are widely acknowledged to be indispensable in meeting our commitments over the next decades. While these plants are currently planned to operate through 2050, replacing them or adding additional nuclear capacity cannot happen overnight. We have a robust regulatory system that ensures any future nuclear plants, like all other plants, must satisfy environmental, safety, and fiscal reviews before construction. To ensure sufficient time for the proper planning, public engagement, permitting, and ultimate construction of new units, the public utility commission must have its previous authority to issue certificates of need for nuclear plants reinstated now, not later.



While limiting new nuclear construction may well have been appropriate 40 years ago, the energy needs and environmental expectations of this century cannot justify a blanket exclusion of this technology in moving forward. We recognize the need for ongoing stakeholder conversations, especially with communities with whom commitments have been broken or whose due consideration was not adequately given. We ask that this committee advance HF2002 to the full body today, to encourage these important conversations to continue, and allow for a reversal of the legacy policy, which unduly excludes one of the most proven and promising energy technologies from being used to meet the shared energy goals of the citizens of Minnesota.