

Action Alert, Sept. 2, 2009

Urge Energy Dept. to Extend Public Comment Period on Nuclear Loan Guarantee Rules!

On August 7th, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) posted an announcement in the Federal Register about proposed changes to its nuclear loan guarantee program. This weakening of the rules could well put taxpayers at increased risk of being left holding the bag for tens of billions of dollars in loan repayments, when new nuclear projects default.

Despite such astronomical financial risks, and the complex technical nature of the regulatory changes, DOE has allowed just 30 short days for public comments to be submitted. The month long comment period just so happened to coincide with the August congressional recess, meaning that many watchdog groups, as well as House and Senate Members and staff, would be on travel, and not find out about it till Congress resumes in earnest the day after Labor Day. But that's the very day that comments are currently due – Tuesday, Sept. 8th.

On August 20th, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Natural Resources Defense Council, Nuclear Information and Resource Service, Public Citizen, Taxpayers for Common Sense, and the Union of Concerned Scientists wrote DOE, requesting a 60 day extension to the comment period.

Please email DOE right away at lgprogram@hq.doe.gov. Express support for the Aug. 20 environmental coalition letter, and urge DOE to grant the 60 day extension to the comment period.

Alert your U.S. Senators and Representative to DOE's sneak maneuver, by calling them via the U.S. Capitol Switchboard, (202) 224-3121. Urge your Members of Congress to themselves contact DOE and demand a 60 day extension to the comment period, so that their staff can submit carefully considered comments to protect American taxpayers against the astronomical financial risks of new atomic reactors and uranium enrichment facilities.

And watch for an additional alert in the next few days, inviting groups to join a coalition comment submission currently in the works, to be turned in by Sept. 8th in case DOE rejects our extension request. Individuals can send comments directly to the DOE email address given above.

To learn more about DOE's proposed nuclear loan guarantees, and to see the "Full Notice of Proposed Rulemaking," go to <http://www.lgprogram.energy.gov/>. Also, see Beyond Nuclear's "Nuclear Costs" website section at <http://www.beyondnuclear.org/nuclear-costs/>. If you have further questions, contact Kevin Kamps at Beyond Nuclear, (301) 270-2209 ext. 1, or kevin@beyondnuclear.org.