

FIVE REASONS LABOUR MUST OPPOSE NUCLEAR POWER

Would you choose this?



Or this?



JOBS

False promises: Promises of 7,000 (Wylfa) or even 20,000 (Moorside) new jobs at new nuclear plants are illusory at best. Many are temporary construction jobs and most will go to those with expertise or to imported labor, not to locals. Nuclear plants are so expensive they may well get canceled along with the promised jobs, leaving nothing to replace them. The same government funds should be used to stimulate safer, long-term jobs that fit the needs of the region.

More jobs in renewables: Nuclear power provides often temporary and unsafe jobs. Countless studies show renewable energy will deliver far more jobs than nuclear power. In Germany there are now close to 400,000 jobs and climbing in the renewable energy sector. There were just 30,000 in nuclear, even before the phaseout began. The renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors offer long-term jobs across multiple sectors, and stimulate the entire supply chain, including ports and the steel industry. 2018 delivered 11 million jobs worldwide in renewable energy, a figure which will keep climbing. This is where future job growth is found.

HEALTH

Women and babies: Women, especially pregnant women, their babies and children, are far more susceptible to harm from exposure to radiation than men. No woman should support nuclear power and no woman or child should live within five miles of a nuclear plant. At least 60 scientific studies now show elevated rates of leukemia among children living close to nuclear power plants. Children should not be condemned to this when we have alternatives.

Routine radioactive contamination: It doesn't take an accident. All nuclear power plants routinely release radioactive gases and liquids into our environment. The radioactive waste they produce will be around for millennia and a storage solution is unsolved. If there is an accident, then the health consequences are immeasurable. We don't need to take on these risks.

COST

Who pays: The only way new nuclear power plants will be built is through government support — in other words taxpayers' money. And electricity rates will rise (see Hinkley C), so ratepayers will also pay. Costs for nuclear plants now under construction regularly double or triple. Because nuclear plants are inherently dangerous, they are more expensive to build and operate than renewables.

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Or this?



The cost of renewables: The costs of renewables and energy efficiency measures are dropping precipitously. Wind and solar are now far cheaper than nuclear or fossil fuels, including natural gas. Storage challenges are being solved. From an economic perspective, there is zero reason to choose nuclear over renewable options.

SMRs aren't cheaper: The still on paper small modular reactors will be far more expensive even than traditional large reactors because of their poor economies of scale. The upfront investment to build enough of them to matter (so-called assembly line production) has no appeal to businesses interested in making a profit.

CLIMATE

Too late: Nuclear power plants take too long to build. Those currently under construction are almost all years behind schedule. From concept to electricity production takes 12-20 years. The climate crisis must be addressed immediately. Nuclear power cannot deliver in time.

Too few: Nuclear power is in decline. The amount of new plants that would be needed to make a dent in carbon emissions would require a massive acceleration — a new plant every other week — that is simply not going to happen. Choosing the nuclear path interrupts what is really needed — rapid and large-scale implementation of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

OUR FUTURE

Accidents: One accident at a nuclear power plant, in Cumbria or Somerset or Suffolk, would end life in that region as we know it and destroy mainstay income producers such as tourism and farming. It is a reckless and unnecessary gamble.

Environmental destruction: Building new nuclear plants means destroying pristine habitats, wild places and ecosystems. Why sacrifice one of our greatest assets — our glorious countryside and nature — to an industry that will leave it as a nuclear wasteland?

Security risks: The nuclear power industry argues it is needed to supply personnel and know-how to the nuclear weapons sector, given the nuclear propulsion technology is similar. But Labour policy is to cancel Trident. Therefore there will be no need for this pathway. And we should certainly not hand control of our nuclear power plants to countries like China, the global epicenter of cyber hacking, and a clear threat to national security.