

August 12, 2009

Jeffrey D. Byron, Commissioner  
California Energy Commission  
1516 Ninth Street, MS-32  
Sacramento, CA, 95814

# DOCKET

09-IEP-1M

DATE 8/12/2009

RECD. 8/17/2009

Tiffany Solorio

Subject: Nuclear Power In California

Dear Mr. Byron,

I presented a public statement at the CEC Workshop in Sacramento, August 10, 2009. I have sent this letter and a slightly revised and corrected version of my written statement, together with the references I cited, by email, to your assistant, Tiffany Solorio.

I want to thank you for your closing remarks regarding the meeting you recently attended hosted by EPRI with many utility executives. Your comment that 80 percent of the executives in that meeting, when surveyed, believed that nuclear power was the way to address climate change was encouraging to me, and to my colleagues from ACRE. It made me feel that my trip to Sacramento was not totally futile, and I want to thank you for that remark.

However, in my opinion we still face a 'chicken and egg' like dilemma that results in a stalemate.. You recommended that any change to the scope of studies by the CEC must start with the legislature. This leads to the dilemma that none of the recent reports by the CEC address nuclear power from the perspective of the needs of California, and without definitive studies such as those done by the CEC, the legislature uses the Warren-Alquist Act as an excuse for inaction.

In my extemporaneous remarks given while presenting my statement, I urged that a compromise position could be adopted that might permit the legislature to change their position over time. The compromise would begin by directing or allowing the CEC to conduct studies which include the nuclear option. I suggested that three types of nuclear plants be considered, a dual unit plant for power production (an LWR), a dual unit plant for synthetic fuel production (perhaps an HTGR), and a dual unit plant for power production and water de-salting. I still think this is a good idea.

The concluding paragraph in my statement is still particularly relevant. A recommendation by the CEC would have a strong influence on the legislature. It arguably would provide the basis for the legislature to suspend or amend the Warren Alquist Act to permit such a study leading to prototypes to proceed. I hope you and the commission will at least consider breaking the stalemate by requesting the legislature, or even just the Governor, to authorize such a study as a first step.

For my part, I will contact members of the legislature, and try to obtain authorization for some such approach that will break the stalemate on nuclear power in California.

Sincerely,

Robert F. Williams

Attachments as stated including resume