NH-520-June-8-2021-FINAL-Dave-Kraft-ILL-bailout-bill

Libbe HaLevy

00:00:01

Nuclear greed wild, the nuclear industry, and especially Exelon corporation continue to gobble up millions and billions of taxpayer dollars to bail out their aging failing, dangerous technology. One of the many questions becomes how do we know exactly what they're doing with these taxpayer generated funds? You'd assume such massive amounts of money would require strict reporting checks and balances, audits, oversight that kind of rigorous monitoring. But then you learn,

Dave Kraft

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Government agencies have said that the NRCS formula is inadequate and that most of these funds will be underfunded. The point is there are no state regulations which allow anyone, any transparent access to see how the money is spent. So we don't know if the money is being spent on decommissioning or Dunkin donuts. They do not require an audit. They do not require that standard accounting principles based in the United States be used in accounting for the money. There's nothing and the NRC doesn't care and the state has nothing in place.

Libbe HaLevy

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Well, isn't that special when you hear how once again, the nuclear industry is going to be allowed to play loose and fast with billions of taxpayer dollars. You begin to recognize that your pockets are being picked clean by that voracious money hungry industry, while you're still stuck in that dangerous radioactive seat that we all share

Announcer

00:01:39

Clear hot seat. What are those people thinking? Nuclear hot seat. What have those boys been breaking their hot seat? The Ms. Sinking our time to act is shrinking, but nuclear Hotsy. It's the bomb.

Libbe HaLevy

00:02:10

Welcome to nuclear hot seat. The weekly international news magazine, keeping you up to date on all things nuclear from a different perspective. My name is Leiby Halevi. I am the producer and host as well as a survivor of the nuclear accident at three mile island from just one mile away. So I know what can happen when those nuclear so-called experts get it wrong. This week, we catch up on the latest developments in the nuclear industry, manipulated bailout of aging, failing unprofitable and dangerous nuclear reactors. This time in Illinois, Dave craft, who is head of nuclear energy information service, or any I S based in Chicago, fills us in on the latest smoke and intended to hide the nuclear industry's insatiable demand for money to bail out their failing reactors and industry, and the decisions being made by the Illinois legislature in perhaps the next two weeks will have implications for years, decades, and beyond something the states legislators seem unwilling to learn about before they vote.

Libbe HaLevy

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Well, maybe we can get them to listen to this program. We will also have nuclear news from around the world, numb nuts of the week for outstanding nuclear bone headedness, and more honest nuclear information then seems to be evidenced by those working within the Biden administration. All of it coming up in just a few moments today is Tuesday, June 8th, 2021. And here is this week's nuclear news from a different perspective, starting with the U S where on Sunday, June 6th, energy secretary, Jennifer Granholm said the government must work with private companies to block cyber attacks, capable of shutting down the nation's power grid. What she refrained from mentioning anywhere in that talk was that the thing that resulted in the meltdowns at three nuclear reactors in Fukushima was loss of power from the electrical grid that was needed to run the pumps for cooling. So power grid, vulnerability equals nuclear vulnerability.

Libbe HaLevy

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Anyone who thought the Biden administration might take a saner approach to nukes. Think again, Gina McCarthy, former head of the EPA, and now president Biden's climate advisor said now, I don't expect those old ones, meaning nuclear reactors to be around a long time, but I do expect them to be safe. And I expect them to continue in a way that's going to allow us to keep the greenhouse gas emissions down with really stable base load capacity. But as we all know, when it comes to nuclear expectations are quite often disappointed, dangerously. So, and climbing on the nukes are green. Bandwagon is no guarantee that Gina McCarthy's expectations will be fulfilled. We've learned that Exelon's nuclear lobbyist bragged about the profitability of New York state governor Cuomo's nuclear bailout. We'll have more about that on this week's interview. And now for your weekly dose of nuclear bone headedness,

Libbe HaLevy

00:05:45

Nazi propaganda minister, Joseph followed the edict. A lie told often enough becomes the truth. At least it's perceived as the truth. And that's what the nuclear industry continues to do with its well-funded talking points and languaging hacks case in point and May 24th article by one Steven Ashby published in the Tri-City Herald in Richland Washington home of the Hanford site and all those yummy high paying radioactive jobs in an obviously biased article, not unexpected in this publication entitled how Tri-Cities national lab research is fueling a carbon free nuclear future among the only 569 words in the article, not even a page and a half Ashby uses the terms carbon free four times between the headline and only the first six paragraphs. After that, he switches to advanced in describing the nukes as if this makes them any better. That's used five times. These terms, alternate by paragraph with additional sprinklings of new clean, efficient, less expensive.

Libbe HaLevy

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He does everything except Chuck nuclear under the chin and tell it how cute it is. And they do everything for you, but wash the dishes and take out the trash as for radioactive waste. What radioactive waste it's referenced once in the term radioactive dash resistant, and then in a late passing reference in the article to storing it for quote decades until the radioactivity decays ignoring the fact that it will take hundreds of years for the cesium to decay and tens of thousands for the plutonium, but Hey, jobs yet gotta be able to pay for your cancer. Here's the bottom line, nuclear is not green. Nuclear is not carbon free. So-called advanced nukes are unproven designs that have never been built or tested. And this so-called special to the Tri-Cities Herald article is riddled with nuclear lies that don't hold up, but mass hypnosis works by repetition and for the millions of dollars that nuclear invest in public relations, they're getting billions of dollars back taxpayer subsidies, and they're going to keep repeating and repeating these words, catch phrases and soundbites ad infinitum to keep the ignorant enthralled and the money rolling in. Remember the definition of public relations is the manufacture of consent. And that's what the nuclear industry is doing. Manufacturing consent to a deeply deadly flawed technology. And that's why writer Steven Ashby and Tri-City Herald. You are this week's

Libbe HaLevy

00:08:54

We'll have links up to two articles, one an urgent action alert asking for support for the DNA community resisting unacceptable uranium mining, clean up on native lands, including the north east church rock uranium, mine and another on nuclear subsidies may be slowing transition to clean energy. Yes, Inc. Learn more@nuclearhotseat.com under this episode. Number five 20 over to Japan where 31 containers of highly radioactive sediment at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant have exceeded their lifespans. This according to the Japanese nuclear regulatory authority, which has notified operator Tokyo electric power company, TEPCO the nuclear regulation authority blamed the problem on TEPCO underestimating. The radiation, the 31 plastic cylinders were exposed to KEPCO has as many as 3000 of these canisters onsite, which measure 1.5 meters times 1.9 meters or five feet by six feet, approximately. And by measurements of radioactivity, they calculated in 2018 figured that the containers would last until at least July of 2025, but a TEPCO representative recently admitted.

Libbe HaLevy

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We did not have accurate data. They're moving the contents to new containers, but not until August. Despite the concerns of other nations, Japan has yet to reconsider its unilateral decision to discharge, radioactive wastewater from Fukushima into the Pacific ocean nations, which have voiced their concerns include Russia, China, the democratic people's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, New Zealand, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, and Pacific island nations on Monday, June seven, fishery workers and people in watersports businesses in Korea held a rally using fishing boats and yachts to protest Japan's plans. The country still plans to release more than 1.5 million metric, tons of contaminated wastewater into the Pacific ocean with the first discharges beginning in about two years and a new report from the international campaign to abolish nuclear weapons re reveals that the nine nuclear arms states spent $72.6 billion on their nuclear weapons in 2020, this during the worst pandemic in the century.

Libbe HaLevy

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And when the treaty banning nuclear weapons has already become law, we'll link to the report complicit 20, 20 global nuclear weapons spending. We'll have this week's featured interview in just a moment, but first nuclear problems are going to continue to be with us forever. From uranium mining to weapons, production, to radiation, leaking reactors, to still not having a way to safely store the deadly radioactive waste produced by all these endeavors. Nuclear is government and industry gone mad, not caring how they contaminate the world as long as they keep making obscene profits and fool themselves into thinking that they are immune to the consequences of their actions when they certainly are not. Meanwhile, we all have to deal with the dangers of radioactive contamination that will not go away on its own ever, unless you plan to live half a million years, in which case, yeah.

Libbe HaLevy

01:12:33

Then you've got a chance. So let's be honest. Nuclear is a deadly mess, and that is why you need nuclear hot seat. We get into nuclear stories with facts, continuity and context, as well as skepticism and as much humor as this ugly situation will provide. We give you a much deeper and nuanced telling of the facts than you would ever expect. On mainstream media. We get behind the scenes under the skin and into the heart of nuclear matters every week with fresh information and unrelenting perspective. And as I said before, whenever possible humor, that's why the time would be right now to support us with a donation, just go to nuclear, hot seat.com and click on the big red donate button to help us with a donation of any size that's where you can set up a monthly $5, the same as a cup of coffee, and a nice tip here in the U S so by nuclear hot seat, a cup of coffee, I promise you I won't drink the caffeine, but it will go to help the show.

Libbe HaLevy

01:13:43

Keep going, please do what you can now and know that however much you can help. I am deeply grateful that you're listening and that you care. Now, here is this week's featured interview government bailout of nuclear power reactors is trending across the country in contrast to the need to move to a genuinely renewable, sustainable energy future. The money's going to nukes chief among the nuclear welfare recipients with their perpetual handout is excellent corporation. No amount of money seems enough, let alone too much for this nuclear behemoth. And with them spending millions of dollars on PR and lobbying efforts, we're close to an irreversible course in Illinois of them slurping up the funds better spent on genuine renewables. The story is long convoluted and easy to get confused by, which is why I sought out one of the best people we've got to explain the situation.

Libbe HaLevy

01:14:50

Dave craft is of nuclear energy information service headquartered in Chicago. He's a veteran of the battle to reign in nuclear industries, excessive greed, and bad decision-making here. He explains the current situation in Illinois regarding yet another bailout of Exelon's unprofitable, aging, evermore, dangerous nuclear reactors, and how a vote coming up in the state legislature could commit Illinois to an energy path. It will come to regret. I spoke with Dave craft on Monday, June 7th, 2021. And my apologies for the construction noises in the background, Dave Kraft have any I S so good of you to be available on such short notice here on nuclear hot seat.

Dave Kraft

01:15:39

Glad to be here as always,

Libbe HaLevy

01:15:41

Let's start with a little bit of background about what's happening in Illinois. What was the 2016 Illinois clean energy legislation and what was its intention?

Dave Kraft

01:15:51

The 2016 legislation that was the future energy jobs act. FIJA was a end result of about two, two and a half years of both an Exelon comment and manipulating. So I actually have to go back as far back as 2013, because that's when Exelon in Illinois first announced that, oh, poverty, our reactors, aren't making money for us. They're not making enough. Maybe the legislature should bail us out. If you don't, Illinois is going to become, you know, the middle ages all over again. So they started that belly aching in late 2013 into 2014. And I know Illinois around that time, a group called the climate table emerged, and actually the climate table emerged to create comments for Obama's clean air act. We wanted to make sure that fossil fuels was addressed in the Obama rules that were coming out, but the project morphed into becoming the team that developed the environmental legislation at the state level for what to do about energy and how to save renewable power.

Dave Kraft

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So from 2014 to 2016, there were a lot of negotiations going on between the environmental community, the utilities, the legislators, and that resulted in the 2016 FIJA bill, which ended up giving excellent two nuclear reactors that they claim were money losers, $2.3 billion in bailouts over a 10 year period. So what makes the situation different now is fast forwarding to 2021. It became clear that FIJA was a good start, but it underfunded the renewables dramatically that we really needed to up the ante on that quite a bit. In the meantime, what has changed though is number one, we have a new governor. He's a democratic governor. JB give you places. And Bruce Rauner, who was a Republican businessman who negotiated, helped negotiate the tenure $2.3 billion bailout. The second major change though has been that Exelon and Commonwealth Edison's lobbyists have been indicted. And in some cases pled guilty to lobbying irregularities, poor ethical choices, which resulted in literally commented the subsidiary of Exelon pleading guilty and paying a $200 million fine to the federal government further though, the FBI continues to investigate the previous Illinois speaker of the house, Michael Madigan, who had been the other architect of the FIJA bill, the $2.3 billion bail out.

Dave Kraft

01:18:36

He was house speaker for 50 years. He set an all-time national record for how speaker consecutive years. And he ran the show. He was more powerful than the governor. He was in with Exelon and comments. So anything they wanted, they got, and he's gone. He resigned finally at the beginning of the year or late last year. I forget which so that's another thing that's different now. So we have a new governor. We have a new speaker of the house. We have a company that used to have a lot of political sway down in our state Capitol, under indictment, and perhaps more, the FBI continues its investigations. So the final piece that's different also at the national level begins in 2016 with the Trump administration is FERC. The federal energy regulatory commission was given marching orders to bail out coal plants, fossil fuel plants. And so they came out with some ridiculous rules and regulations on ways to do that.

Dave Kraft

01:19:36

And the folks here in Illinois saw that as a real threat to the continued expansion of renewables here, you know, based on what they wanted to build on from 2016. So they looked at a loophole that existed in the first regulations, which would have allowed Illinois to establish its own market call a capacity market, which would allocate money to power plants so that we would ensure that we would have the power available in the future. That's one of the ways that utilities make money it's called the capacity market. And the other way they make money is to sell electrons. So one is an insurance policy. The other is actual manufacturer of power. So the deal though, they had to get cut as always was that excellent had to get a pound of flesh out of it. So they had been working on this language within its own bill.

Dave Kraft

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The current bill called CJ, the clean energy jobs act. And there was a little bit of a carve out on this capacity market, which would have benefited both renewable energy and nuclear plants. Everything else in CJ is just magnificent. It is a work of art, really a of the art piece of legislation that integrates environmental justice and community concerns, just transitions, community, solar, community, distributed energy. It really took a comprehensive look at how energy integrates into your whole economy, your whole fabric. And at the same time, you know, it was promoting much bigger build-out of renewables, energy efficiency, energy storage, and transmission improvements. So honestly, there are thousands of personnel, hours of work that was put in by the environmental community, the environmental justice community, community activists, to create this bill, but for 20 pages of crap, all a that bails out nuclear plants, we could not support that.

Dave Kraft

02:21:33

And that brings us to the current situation down in our state Capitol. So our legislative session was scheduled to end May 31st, and it did at midnight. And there were five major energy bills in the hopper. There was the CGI bill, which I just described by the environment. The governor put his own bill in the hopper. Both of those by the way, were both 900 pages plus of legislation, the Exelon folks, because they become so toxic, did not put their own legislation in, but they were able to get labor, especially the trade union laborers like IBW pipe fitters, boilermakers, and stuff like that to carry water for them. So they put a bill in the hopper. There was another bill put forward by the new blend energy industry called path to 100. And there was one other fifth one, which was big. And then there were two other smaller ones from downstate utilities.

Dave Kraft

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So you can imagine the legislators had to Wade through 4,000 plus pages of competing legislation to come up with something at the end. And of course, what's the old statement by Bismarck. You know, the two things you don't want to see made are law and sausage. So we realized that all of this stuff was going to get dumped into the legend Matic and chopped up and reassembled as a final piece, and nobody was going to get everything, but we want it. We eat meaning nuclear energy information service wanted to be sure that something we dubbed the nuclear hostage crisis finally ends. We coined that phrase back in 2014 to describe the process by which excellent and the other nuclear utilities, panic pedals, state legislators, into bailing them out. And the way they do it is they announced that a plant is economically distressed and not being rewarded by the market for their environmental benefits of being low carbon.

Dave Kraft

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They of course get their workers all upset. And there was families of the workers who then get the mayors of the towns nearby, whose tax based depends on the company town industry, which is excellent. And they get their legislators all worked up in a frenzy that if you don't bail out, excellent, we're going to lose all these direct jobs. All these indirect jobs, the tax base is going to go down the toilet. So this has been a blueprint that excellent has milked very successfully since 2014. And I presume other utilities have done a variation of this and their communities as well. It's based on the premise though, that reactors are going to live forever, that they're never going to end that nobody knows when the termination is supposed to be. So these jobs have to be protected at all costs. And that's simply not true.

Dave Kraft

02:24:12

We point out every reactor has an operating license and on that operating license is the closure date. So everyone knows in advance when the plants are going to close. And we urge mayors and workers and labor unions to protect their constituents by being adults and getting a retirement program in place called just transitions. You always save for a rainy day and when those plants go away, that's the rainy day. So if you don't have something in place ahead of time, for sure, you're going to end up with a destroyed tax base with jobs lost. So you plan ahead. That's all we've been saying since 2014. So finally in this round of legislation, just transitions is being talked about, but only primarily for the fossil fuel industry, coal plants, gas plants. We worked really hard to try and incorporate the nuclear communities as well, but there's some difficulties with that, but they may, they may be able to get around it.

Dave Kraft

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So this is the mess that legislators had to pull together into legislation by the end of the session, and they failed to do it. So we have no energy bill. We do know that the legislators and negotiators, while the parties are working together on a new draft of something, which has not been released and the governor and the legislators have mentioned in the public press that they anticipate within the next two weeks, they're going to call a special session and enact an energy bill, but nobody knows what's going to be in it at this point. So this is the crazy situation we have. We have the opportunity to be the premier energy legislation in the country or the absolute nothing, because we won't have any energy legislation. And in the meantime, excellence still goes on its Merry way, claiming poverty claiming they need money. Now, one other little quirk to this go-round came about when the newly elected governor Pritzker said, because of the scandal here with Exelon and comment, utilities will not be writing energy legislation anymore.

Dave Kraft

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And when Exelon cried poverty this time, he said, we are hiring an independent auditor who has never done business with you before, and you will open your books and prove that you need money. So that was a real plus the company that he tapped was sinaps energy from, I believe they're back east and they have a very good reputation of being independent and doing thorough work. They released their report at the end of April. And at that point, Exelon and the union people had been saying, we need 500 million a year for anywhere from nine to 15 years. That's what their target was for available out. So you're talking a pretty good chunk of change. There, $5 billion. Perhaps the audits stated that the two reactors that excellent claimed were losing money, shouldn't get any more than on the average of 70 million a year for five years, a total of 350 million.

Dave Kraft

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And that was based on information that Exelon provided to the auditor to put in their black box and, and create these results. So they announced this at the end of April, of course, excellent said, that's ridiculous. You know, we need much more, but the governor stuck to his guns until this last week before the session ended, when the law and sausage principle applied. So suddenly there was informal leaking of information that, well, now we're talking maybe 600 million over five years instead of the 350 million over five years, this past weekend, which is the weekend of June 4th and fifth. Another report came out of a group in Washington, independent report, which indicated that if Exelon were to get a bailout, the amount of money they could reap over that same period could be as high as a billion dollars. So we've gone from a fact-based audit, which cost a quarter million dollars to do from an independent auditor saying no more than 3 52 up to a billion. And at this point we do not know where the legislative dark is going to hit on the target. That is the craziness of the situation here in Illinois. And I suspect it will be played out in any other arena where excellent has reactors again, like New York, Maryland, anywhere else around the country.

Libbe HaLevy

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It's almost as if Exelon is counting on bailouts to be consciously adopted and very profitable as a piece of their business.

Dave Kraft

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That is correct. In fact, in 2018, there was an industry conference fellow. I forget where it was exactly, but one of the presenters at the conference was, I don't know if it's audacious or stupid enough to actually put a slide up, announcing that this notion of bail out, if they didn't use the word Dale out, but that this was a very profitable source of income. And he used the New York bail out as an example, which on his slide said for an investment of, you know, a couple of hundred million dollars, we're getting something on the order of six or 7 billion back. So the return on investment is, you know, 11 times and they talk about it as a return on investment. I consider that part of your business model. If you're going to use that kind of language, we actually do have the slide. We'd be happy to share it with anyone who wants to see it. And we did send it to our legislators in Illinois saying, Hey, is this the business model you want to deal with? When you're, you're afraid to deal with this company, that's already been indicted, pled guilty has been dealing with unethical and illegal lobbying practices. So, you know, that's just the status of politics. You know, you need a rain coats and hit boots. Every time you go down to the state legislature, it seems,

Libbe HaLevy

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And the close pin for your nose as well. What kind of response, if any, have you gotten from legislators from your outreach with this information,

Dave Kraft

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We have received a thunderous round of indifference early on before they were even down to legislation, going through Pritzker, commissioned a number of working groups to deal with various facets of what would be in an energy bill. We had petitioned to be a part of that discussion, seeing as how nuclear only gives 45 to 55% of the state's electricity. We thought that might be a topic worth discussion discussing, but no, we were not allowed to participate. So then we contacted the governor's assistant who was kind of monitoring this process and said, if we send you information, when you at least have the courtesy to distribute it to the working groups, and he agreed to do that. So as far as I know, we dump this information into the black hole and it gets distributed or not. We're not sure we have no way of knowing.

Dave Kraft

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And what we decided to do was to give them information about the pieces, which we knew they were not going to discuss in the energy legislation, but which is going to have tremendous impact moving forward. And I'll list a few of those now. So you can get an idea. There has been no discussion and will be no discussion of radioactive waste production. We did a testimony several years ago when CJ first came out saying, let them close. That means that Illinois will not produce somewhere between 250 and 350 tons of high level radioactive waste over that period of time. That's great. You know, that's a societal burden. We won't have to pay for it. So there's no discussion of radioactive waste. It's continued production. What's how we're going to deal with it. Another thing that is totally absent and Illinois regulations and laws totally absent on this front is reactor decommissioning, which is the tear down and the cleanup of the site.

Dave Kraft

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Once a reactor closes, we've already experienced that with the Juul reactors north of Chicago called Zion, took them 11 years and they finally got the site down to grade level. They haven't gotten certification that they're radiologically clean yet, but they tore down the reactors. And that process taught us a lot of things about reactor decommissioning. There were funds of money for every reactor that are set aside for the day when they will eat shut down. They have to be torn down. The site has to be cleaned up. It's called the decommissioning fund, but the nuclear regulatory commission at the federal level is largely absent in terms of how that money gets used. They only require that the utilities put money into a fund, and then they have own little black box, which determines whether that's enough or not enough at that particular moment in time, government agencies have said that the NRCS formula is inadequate and that most of these funds will be underfunded, but that's tough.

Dave Kraft

03:32:54

The point is there are no state regulations which allow anyone, any transparent access to see how the money is spent. So we don't know if the money is being spent on decommissioning or Dunkin donuts. They do not require an audit. They do not require that standard accounting principles based in the United States be used in accounting for the money. There's nothing and the NRC doesn't care and the state has nothing in place. So that was something we mentioned to the legislators, Hey, if Exelon is going to threaten closure, that's going to start the clock ticking on decommissioning. And there's about a six or $7 billion pot of money sitting in somewhere that will have no oversight. And no transparent means of seeing how it's spent. We thought you might want to know two other pieces that came up just since the beginning of the year though. And these are scary.

Dave Kraft

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Is that excellent. Early on this, this year at the annual meeting in April announced that it is going to split the company up so that nuclear reactors are going to be put into this one company called spin co. They don't have a name for it yet spinning it off. And all of their other regulated utilities like Commonwealth Edison though, the folks who deal with the wires and the transformers and all that stuff are going to be in the other company, which I forget what it's called. But the point is, all those folks are profitable because they're in a regulated market and they're given a guaranteed rate of, you know, your investment, all of the reactors. However, the things that are the troubled assets, the ones that don't have money, the ones that are losing money. So if you dump all of those into a separate company, and let's say they set them up as individual LLCs, limited liability corporations, if those reactors in the future ever have serious safety problems, or they need to replace steam generators, or the NRC requires them to change out the reactor vessel heads, which are hundreds of millions of dollars in expense, there's no company backing you up with assets to pay for that.

Dave Kraft

03:34:57

So where are they going to turn to get the money? The rate payers once again? So we thought the legislators ought to know that if you're going to sign a contract for five years or 10 years or whatever it is for these bailouts, they're going to dump all of their losing assets into that company. And the repeaters are still going to be stuck paying for it in the future. So that was one piece. And then the other piece is at the federal level. And that's the Biden administration's announcement of trying to get this, whatever it is, $1.9 billion infrastructure bill going friends of the earth did a back of the envelope calculation and looked at the numbers. They were at least initially putting out and determined that over the next decade, the Biden administration tends to spend up to $200 billion on the nuclear industry, 190 billion. I think so you're talking 19 billion a year.

Dave Kraft

03:35:48

And one of the programs that divided the administration is looking at is to set up a national, they call it Zac zero emission credit program, which would bail out troubled nuclear power plants with federal money. So this is essentially what Exxon is trying to do at the state level here in Illinois, but Biden wants to do it federally. So that may be set up in a way that they're mutually exclusive. In other words, you can't double dip, but the point is we need to know and build in the legislation here in Illinois or anywhere else stating that if you take state money, you can't apply for the federal money or vice versa. If you take the federal money, you have to give back the state money. And if you don't put it into law, then there's nothing really stopping you from doing it. So that was a warning flag that we did send up.

Dave Kraft

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Now, I have to say that at least I've seen in a couple of recent press accounts, a couple of these items being flagged and the governor's office, making statements about this. So whether it's our efforts that have resulted in that, or whether they finally grew a brain. So these are the four items that we pointed out that are serious issues they'd have to be discussed because there's so many devils in the details yet, you know, we're in a situation you're Illinois, where they're going to enter into a contract that will be binding for a number of years without looking at the contents. And we don't even know if it's going to be with spin co, which is this imaginary company at the moment, which has no board of directors, no officers, no site of incorporation. And yet the NRC is discussing with excellent transferring the reactor licenses into this company. It's surreal. It is just absolutely surreal. What is going on right now? This is similar to you buying a house and you don't know who the bank is on the other end for the contract. And you don't know who you're buying it from, and there's nothing in the mortgage contract yet, yet you're required to pledge, you know, so many thousands of dollars or hundreds of dollars, thousands of dollars or whatever. That's the situation that we are engaging in with this legislation, right?

Libbe HaLevy

03:37:57

I have it tricked out in every possible direction. It seems. I'm wondering with all of this being so impactful to not only the energy future, but to the environment and our ability to continue to live within it. What has been the position of other climate change and clean energy groups regarding the nuclear aspect of this upcoming legislation?

Dave Kraft

03:38:25

As I mentioned earlier, my organization, nuclear energy information service. We are members of the Illinois climate table, but we have told the table, we cannot support legislation because of the nuclear bailout. I mean, it's just, it's a non-starter for us. The other organizations involved though, are still operating. I think in the same mode of politicking that was going on that characterize the previous generation when corrupt Michael Madigan was the speaker of the house for 50 years and an Exelon and con ed owned Springfield, those days are over, but we're still operating. I think in a mode that they feel they have to negotiate and compromise and whatever, cause they don't, no party feels strong enough to win legislation on their own. And that includes excellent. And that includes labor. So there does have to be some sort of give and take and compromise. However, it's been clear all along that at this juncture, the climate tables first priority is to shut down the fossil fuel industry.

Dave Kraft

03:39:29

They have a hard stop on shutting down coal plants, which is the year 2030. I don't know if that'll remain in the final bill, but that was the goal. And they wanted to make sure that if there were a need for more energy, that it wouldn't be replaced by natural gas. So shutting down the nuclear plants to the coalition seemed like a non-starter. They don't have the faith that we can build enough renewables and efficiency and storage and transmission in time to either keep rates low or actually have enough electrons. We dispute that and we've recommended that they at least take a look at the work of people like Mark Jacobson of Stanford university, who we, we recently did a program and invited legislators to view and they didn't. But you know, he did a state-by-state analysis, which showed how you get to a hundred percent renewable energy future.

Dave Kraft

04:40:23

In fact, that's been our mantra all along Libby is we point out to the legislature. You can't have a clean energy future by bailing out the past. And that's what they're doing. You know, we, we joked with them even when we were giving our testimony, asking them will the next bill be a bill that bails out blacksmiths or Coopers, or kind of still go wagon makers who were lost their jobs and their tax base because the automobile came in or automation came, you know, it's that stupid. And we try and get that across. In fact, there've been recent closures of enormous industrial impact in Illinois, which did not get bailed out. We pointed out that a number of years ago, Mitsubishi corporation closed the plant in downstate, Illinois, which resulted in the loss of somewhere around 1600 or 1800 jobs overnight. They didn't get bailed out the community didn't get bailed up. We just heard recently, I believe Jeep, which manufacturers vehicles out in Belvedere, Illinois, which used to be a Chrysler plant is also going to be laying off something like 1400 workers. I don't hear any of these people saying, oh God, we have to bail out Belvedere. You have to bail out Rockford. It's only excellent. It's only comment. They get the special treatment. And that's ridiculous.

Libbe HaLevy

04:41:39

So given all the challenges that you're facing with this new legislation coming up, it sounds like rather rapidly. What items does NIS think must be included in the final legislation

Dave Kraft

04:41:53

Early on when we announced that we couldn't support any of the bills that supported nuclear power, we took the tack of saying what should be in a final bill. And there were three very simple, but very critical cases. The first is of course, no nuclear bailouts. And I told you our mantra, you can't have an energy future by bailing out the past. The second is you aggressively take whatever money you were dumb enough to consider using for the bailout and put it into not just renewables, but energy efficiency. We are talking energy storage. We're talking about improving transmission because each of those, if they were improved on and maximized have significant climate impacts and significant economic impacts for local communities, the third piece, and this is very important. We have been championing this for eight years. Now. There must be a very rigorous just transitions package put together, which protects the local tax base over a period of time and gives workers an opportunity for job training, bring new jobs to the community.

Dave Kraft

04:43:02

You know, an economic transition package, which is funded by the utilities that are outgoing to ease that transition because we saw what happened to the Zion community in 1998, when then Commonwealth Edison closed down the Zion plant, that community lost 55% of its tax base. Overnight. You can imagine what that did to the school system, to public services. It totally disrupted the real estate market. As jobs were lost. People moved out, it's totally devastated the community and they haven't recovered. Since we had tried to get people to say, look, talk to the ex mayor of Zion, talk to the present mayor of Zion, learn the lessons so that it doesn't get repeated and enact adjust transitions. If you do that, that's prudent planning the final thing. And it's not something we demand, but we've harped on this since Fiji days, 20 14, 20 16 is the legislators don't understand that we are not in an energy transition.

Dave Kraft

04:44:01

Transitions are incremental steps. One forward, half back. You know, everybody gets a little of this, a little of that. It's very gradual, incremental and linear. That's not the way the world is operating right now. We are in a place of energy. Transformation and transformations are a totally different phenomenon. They are not linear. They do not take little baby steps. They leap, they jump and they do it at unpredictably and people get left behind unless they plan ahead for contingency. That is the way energy is going on worldwide. Right now we pointed this out in Europe, back in 20 14, 20 16 with the Aidan company and others showing the in their corporate documents that they recognize that energy is. We thought of it in the past is over and we have to re totally rethink how energy has done. So we're trying to get across this notion that you can't successfully meet a transformation by these transitional baby steps and in business as usual and incrementalism, that hasn't flown very well because the job of a legislature is to please everybody and write legislation, which is all compromised. Well, there are some things that like you don't compromise that surgery comes to mind, you know, well, take out 60 per cent of the appendix. And I don't know if I can afford the rest. I'll come back in two years. You know, some things just are not amenable to that kind of analysis. And that is what a transformation is about. Okay.

Libbe HaLevy

04:45:34

How soon is this bill going to be coming up for a vote? And how does it,

Dave Kraft

04:45:39

The word on the grapevine is again, the legislators themselves said they had hoped. We called back within two weeks of May 31st to come back on final language and vote on it. So that is the last word we've heard. We have not gotten any more briefings on content or negotiation or anything. We've seen no text. So we really don't know what's going on behind closed doors at this point, but that is the timeline. Next two weeks, June 14th, maybe

Libbe HaLevy

04:46:09

What are the implications of this vote for other states and other energy policies?

Dave Kraft

04:46:13

There's good news and bad news here. Absent the bailout. Of course, if CJ were to have gotten past or many of the important provisions get incorporated in whatever is the final bill states around the country will have an exceptional model on how to deal with this transformation to community-based power and how to protect your economy and how to bring equity into the energy industries, where people of color are given a better crack at introducing entrepreneurial opportunities and jobs and community programs and stuff. It's a blueprint. It is a masterpiece on those levels, but we hope the other states will also learn that don't bail out someone who is holding your community hostage. You're negotiating with hostage takers. They are not utilities. They are not your friends. They will sell out your workers as soon as it's profitable enough for them to do that. So don't bail them out at one point.

Dave Kraft

04:47:14

And I guess folks thought this was a little bit too drastic. We were actually referring to this as nuclear terrorism, because if you look at the definition of what a terrorist does, a terrorist makes threats in exchange for some sort of desired outcome, whether it's financial or political. And that's exactly what is going on in this circumstance. The threat of economic devastation is being held over the states over these communities, unless we pony up and pay off the hostage makers. I guess folks didn't like the extremity of that language, but if you go back to Webster, sure. Reads true to us. So what we're hoping other states will learn the lesson here that if you want to go somewhere, go there. If you want a hundred percent renewables, go there. In fact, our friend and colleague go, I think you've had on this show, Argent Maka, Johnny from the Institute for energy and environmental research wrote the book in 2007. Carbon-free nuclear free a roadmap for us energy policy. So this is not rocket science. It's not something new. It's finally getting around to implement what we really need.

Libbe HaLevy

04:48:18

Is there any way that listeners to nuclear hot seat can be of assistance to you and the people of Illinois on this issue?

Dave Kraft

04:48:27

Well, as we've been doing in Illinois, we have urged people to write their legislators and the governor and just articulate the three things we do want in energy legislation, no bailouts, aggressive, renewables, inefficiency, and just transitions. It's very simple. In fact, it's convenient too, because governor Pritzker does have a website and on the site and the contact page is an area where you can leave these messages by email. You don't have to live in Illinois. I mean, energy. Future is energy future. I mean, all of this has tremendous impacts on climate and folks. Aren't recognizing that if you waste money on nuclear, that's money, not spent on dealing with the climate crisis through renewables and efficiency, anybody can play. It's a big planet, we're all here.

Libbe HaLevy

04:49:13

And of course we will post the information on nuclear hotseat.com under this episode, number five 20 for now, I wish you and any, I S every possible success with turning this bill around so that it doesn't continue to protect and pay Exelon. And I want to thank you for being my guest this week on nuclear hot seat.

Dave Kraft

04:49:38

It's great to be with you again. Thanks a lot.

Libbe HaLevy

04:49:41

That was Dave craft of nuclear energy information service, N E I S headquartered in Chicago. We will have links up to some of Dave's articles, as well as information on how to write directly to the governor of Illinois and specific legislators. All of that will be on our website, nuclear hot seat.com under this episode, number 520

Announcer

05:50:05

Activists.

Libbe HaLevy

05:50:14

There's an interesting article from waging non-violence dot org called four lessons for climate organizers from the anti-nuclear movement. It goes into a bit of history about the clamshell in new England and the abalone Alliance in California in 1977, the clamshell Alliance organized over 2000 people to demonstrate against the Seabrook nuclear power plant in Seabrook, New Hampshire, over 1400 people were arrested for trespassing and were incarcerated for days in national guard, outposts around New Hampshire. More than 500 of them refused to pay bail and were ultimately released without consequence. National reporters descended on this previously obscure project and awareness of the anti-nuclear movement. Skyrocketed overnight. This so-called trigger event was spread by the clamshell Alliance to newly interested people across the country. And the most prominent of these new alliances was with the abalone Alliance in California. Abalone achieved a breakthrough in its fight against the proposed Diablo canyon nuclear facility, when an organized over 500 people to risk arrest in 1978, and then held a rally with over twenty-five thousand people in 1979, among the advice enumerated in this article, fight the war, not just the battle, go big, go for the numbers in your events, feed off each other's momentum, don't resent.

Libbe HaLevy

05:51:55

What other groups are getting use it to help you springboard ahead. Know what success looks like. Success means growing the movement and winning public support for the cause. If we're doing those two things, even lost battles can pave the way to ultimate victory and national and local is a two way street. National organizations need to become more adept at supporting local campaigns, and they need to work strenuously to ensure that the local activists get credit where it's due. Hello, they're friends of the earth. We're going to link to this article because it's got some real juicy points and great motivation for us. As we move forward here in California, beloved long-time activist, Jean Stone has passed away. He did so in his sleep peacefully and comfortably his wife, Joyce Fournier expressed how grateful she was for all who are able to participate in his unique and much treasured.

Libbe HaLevy

05:53:00

I'm still alive celebration on zoom about a month and a half ago of that call with more than 80 activists from around the country and the world Chi-Ming in. Jean said, first, thank you for putting this together. Who else gets to speak at their own celebration of life? It will be wonderful to see and speak with so many people that we have all come together with the circle of life. We have set on the earth together to say prayers for each other and mother earth. Then putting our prayers into action by working on issues like water, nuclear weapons, and nuclear waste, and so many other things that are important to us and life on our planet. It has been an honor to walk with all of you in this life. Please continue working together and always walk in your own good and continue to do this social and environmental work until we make the world a better place.

Libbe HaLevy

05:54:03

Plant more trees and spread more love. I'll see you on the other side, where the mountains meet the oceans. Sincerely gene stone, three trees cloud gene stone was one of the kindest, gentlest, most compassionate and loving activists and human beings I have ever met. And one of the first who reached out to me when I was a newbie to nuclear issues, 10 years ago, he was always available with some words of advice and emergency interview. When I came up short for the program and spiritual grounding for this forever battle in which we are involved, may he find peace with spirit and much comfort to his wife, Joyce Fournier and his son, Micah stone, my own footnote. Jean died of esophageal cancer with multiple throat tumors. It makes me wonder about the number of times he was out at Santa Ana fray, walking around, taking readings right next to the five eighth inch thin canisters each carrying more than a true Noble's worth of radiation.

Libbe HaLevy

05:55:17

I guess we'll never know if there was a connection and a heads up that next week. The program of June 15th is episode number 5 21, which means it is the start of the 11th year of nuclear hot seat. It's our 10th anniversary. I don't know that I have time to put together anything special, but know that the date is special to me. And hopefully it will be for you as well. This has been nuclear hot seat for Tuesday, June 8th, 2021 material for this week show has been researched and compiled from nuclear-news.net to own Renard that wordpress.com beyond nuclear international.com the international campaign to abolish nuclear weapons, or I can huffpost.com VOA news.com truthout.org haul. No try dash city herald.com may nietzsche.jp China, daily.com, Korea times.co dot K R S P global.com. The Barron's observer.com waging non-violence dot org and the captured and compromised by the industry. They're supposed to be regulating nuclear regulatory commission, thanks to all of you for listening.

Libbe HaLevy

05:56:39

And if you want to make certain that you never miss a single episode of nuclear hot seat, there's an easy way to do so. Just go to our website, nuclear hot seat.com. Look for the yellow opt inbox. That's where you put in your first name. You put in an email address, simple as that. You will be getting an email with the show as it posts every week. That also includes a short summary of some of the material that is in that show. You can also find us on any one of the podcast channels that are out there, and here's where I need and have come to rely on your help. You're up close and personal with your nuclear issues wherever you happen to be. So if you have a story lead, a hot tip or a suggestion of someone to interview, send me an email info@nuclearhotseat.com and I'll see what I can do about it.

Libbe HaLevy

05:57:32

And of course, if you appreciate weekly verifiable news updates about nuclear issues around the world, take a moment. That's all it will take. Go to nuclear, hot seat.com and look for the big red button. That's where you can really help us out with a donation. And we will appreciate your support. This episode of nuclear hot seat is copyright 2021 Leiby Halevi and hardest street communications, all rights reserved, but fair use allowed. As long as proper attribution is provided. This is Leiby Halevi of hardest street communications. The heart of the art of communicating, reminding you that with nuclear, the number one issue is, and a must be long range safety for people and the environment. There you go. You have just had your nuclear wake-up call. So don't go back to sleep because we're all in the nuclear hot seat,

Announcer

05:58:31

Clear hot seat. What are those people thinking? Nuclear hot seat. What have those boys been breaking their hot seat? The Ms. Sinking our time to act is shrinking, but nuclear Hotsy it's bomb.