

Additional Review By M. D. Campbell and Associates, L.P.
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US Nuclear Industry Set for Expansion

By Kim Landers, North America Correspondent, Australian Broadcasting Company, ABC News (ABC.net.au)

Nuclear reactors already provide 20 per cent of America's electricity needs. The nuclear power industry in the United States is undergoing what some are calling a renaissance. Buoyed by concerns about global warming and **propped up** by various federal subsidies, the nuclear power industry in America is set to expand for the first time in almost 30 years. Two new nuclear



reactors are being planned for a Texas field just a few miles from the Gulf of Mexico. It is the first license application since the Three Mile Island accident in 1979.

America's nuclear revival has been kicked off by [NRG Energy](#), a company which has coal, oil and gas interests worldwide, including the Gladstone power station in Queensland (Australia).

It has just one nuclear plant in south Texas, right next door to where its two nuclear reactors will be built. But there is a **suspicion** that an industry once considered **stagnant** is getting its **jumpstart** thanks to billions of dollars in **subsidies and tax breaks** being **lavished** upon it with the prospect of more to come.

Jim Riccio from Greenpeace has had two decades of nuclear policy experience. He says the power companies are seeking lucrative grants.

[The author's word selection: "suspicion", "stagnant", "jumpstart", and "lavished" represents her attempt to introduce the idea that something is amiss with the NRG Energy move to build new reactors. The reader must ask: "suspicion by whom? Was the industry stagnant or just maturing with what reactors they had to work with? Her use of the terms "jumpstart" and "lavished" suggests that there is something inappropriate with receiving subsidies and tax breaks. The action by NRG is not without risk and in receiving financial assistance is no different from other industries that receive "billions of dollars in subsidies and tax breaks", which include the solar and wind-power industries.]

"Really what you have going on in here in this country is a bunch of nuclear corporations who realize that the numbers don't add up to build new reactors, and so what they're doing is they're positioning themselves right now to try to get their noses into the federal government trough of money," he said.

[1. Just what do the opinions of *Greenpeace* mouthpiece, Jim Riccio, offer to this article? He was never in "the industry". Prior to *Greenpeace*, Riccio worked for the *Nuclear Information Resource Service* and *Public Citizen's Critical Mass Energy Project*. Riccio has a bachelor's degree in international relations and political science, plus a law degree from New York. As part of a well-paid job, he has been using his "lawyering" skills to try to block development of nuclear power.

2. We would think that *Greenpeace* co-founder, Dr. Patrick Moore, who recognized the need for nuclear power in the 1980s, would have more to bring to the article than Riccio (see article on Dr. Moore's position on energy issues ([Here](#))). In addition, others, like Stuart Brand, founder of the [Whole Earth Catalog](#), long-time environmental advocate, is now solidly in favor of nuclear power. Going back to [James Lovelock](#) (founder of the [Gaia theory](#)), he was one of the first taking an environmental position who held that nuclear power must be part of the energy solution. [Jared Diamond](#) also is in favor of using nuclear energy to power the U.S. electrical grid.]

Brad Porlier from NRG Energy says there is an "element of truth" in that claim. "The energy policy act of 2005 that was passed by the Congress does provide benefits to the nuclear industry and to the renewable industry and to green projects - it's not just the nuclear power that will receive some of these benefits," he said.

Climate change

The existing 103 nuclear reactors already provide 20 per cent of America's electricity needs. With demand expected to soar 40 per cent by 2030, the Department of Energy estimates 35 new nuclear plants could be built. The nuclear industry says almost two thirds of Americans support new reactors and that concern about global warming is a key factor.

Mr. Riccio says the industry is twisting the issue of climate change to their advantage. "We actually want to solve climate change - nuclear is the exact wrong direction to go," he said.

"We've known that for a generation, yet despite that, the industry has found a boogey man that they want to use, which is climate change, to be their selling point." Mr. Riccio argues nuclear power is not carbon free because of the emissions from mining uranium, enriching it and building the power plants too.

[Riccio claims to have known for a generation that climate change is a problem, which is patently bogus and a misrepresentation. His claim that nuclear power is not carbon-free because of contributions from mining uranium, enriching it and building the power plants, again is an exaggerated claim as well as a weak argument

because the extent of emission actually is extremely low compared to other energy sources. This same argument can be used to describe the building of solar panels and wind turbines. In addition, as nuclear power replaces coal, oil, and gas for electrical generation, the general trend is underway where uranium mining and enrichment, as well as the building of nuclear-power plants all are becoming increasingly “green”.]

"We know that from analysis here in the States that every dollar you spend on energy efficiency and renewable technologies like wind and solar, goes seven to 10 times further at addressing global warming gases than a dollar spent on nuclear," he said.

[On what basis does Mr. Riccio make these statements? It seems to us that if he had factual information he would want to cite his sources and not expect the reader to take his word for the veracity of his claims. For additional information on these subjects, see the reports from the University of Chicago and MIT, plus industry views (UIC and NEA) cited with links below:

1. University of Chicago Study:

<http://www.ne.doe.gov/np2010/reports/NuclIndustryStudy-Summary.pdf>

2a.MIT Study: <http://web.mit.edu/nuclearpower/>

2b.MIT Study: <http://web.mit.edu/nuclearpower/pdf/nuclearpower-full.pdf>

2c.MIT Study: http://ocw.mit.edu/NR/rdonlyres/Nuclear-Engineering/22-39Fall-2006/D71FEA26-8488-4882-90D5-CE715AEC17C7/0/lec19_nt.pdf

3. UIC Presentation:

<http://www.uic.com.au/08%20Economics%20of%20NP.pdf>

4. NEA Plans: <http://www.nea.fr/html/nea/strat04.pdf>].

While Australia hesitates about whether to embark on a nuclear path, in South Texas there are no doubts. As the nuclear power industry in the US mounts an aggressive comeback campaign, it is also getting encouraging support from presidential candidates. Democratic frontrunners Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama both believe nuclear power is an important part of America's energy mix and both have received substantial campaign contributions from the industry. On the Republican side, leading contenders Rudy Giuliani and Mitt Romney both support an expansion of nuclear power.

The Nuclear Energy Institute ([NEI](#)) in Washington represents the industry. The Institute's Scott Johnson has some strong advice for Australian politicians who resist nuclear power.

"The knee-jerk reaction is to think the public's probably not supportive of nuclear power but that's an old paradigm," he said. "When you look at the issue of climate change, when you look

at the issue of energy costs globally, there's a new situation in which the public is looking at nuclear energy and it would behoove them to understand that more fully."

The NEI also has no doubt that American companies would invest in a fledging Australian nuclear industry.

"I know that the companies here in the US, Westinghouse, GE, Hitachi, others who build reactors definitely see Australia as a market that they would like to play in," Mr. Johnson said.

[We agree that nuclear energy has a major role to play in the U.S. energy mix over the next 50 years, at least. Wind and solar energy have their roles to play as well, especially to supply power in remote regions. End of video [Here](#)]

Jobs and security

The town of Bay City in South Texas wants money and jobs from nuclear power. Its 19,000 residents live about 20 miles from the existing plant. The new reactors will add another 800 jobs to the 1,200-strong work force and another 4,000 jobs will be created during construction, Bay City Mayor Richard Knapik says that is why the city has set up a new training centre to help meet demand.

"For so many years Bay City has been what we refer to as a quiet, little small town. Now we're on the brink of growing," he said. "Bay City and Matagorda County are really excited about the prospect of having two more reactors because they know it means good jobs for a long time and it's a clean, reliable source of energy."

America's first new nuclear reactors in three decades will not appear overnight. The nuclear regulatory commission could take three-and-a-half years to approve them. They will not be running until 2014.

The company that operates the plant says safety is always first and the new reactors could withstand a direct hit from a plane, something Mr. Riccio disputes.

"We still haven't solved many of the safety problems, the security problems or what to do with the radioactive waste," he said.

[Here again, Riccio makes claims that are absurd. The nuclear-power industry has been the safest heavy industry in the U.S. for more than 25 years. Security is tight at all U.S. plant sites. The volume of radioactive waste now being stored at the plants around the country would only occupy a football field to a depth of about 10 feet. Although the site at Yucca Mountain is in political limbo at present, the prognoses are good that solutions will be found soon.]

"And now you have the addition of the fact that you have suicidal terrorists that want to target these reactors to cause harm to the home state."

But Ed Halpin from the nuclear operating company STP says security is not a problem. "Those are robust, hardened units. The containment walls are five feet thick, they're lined with steel and there are walls inside of walls inside of walls before you get to the protected reactor vessel," he said.

[Riccio again makes unsubstantiated claims regarding security and has lost all credibility on nuclear power with such unfounded "lawyer-speak". For a video of the first part of this article, see ([Here](#)).]

Original Article:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/11/21/2097451.htm?section=world>

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