



Nuclear Information and Resource Service

*For a Nuclear-Free, Carbon-Free World*

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## Consumer Watchdog, Environmental Organizations Demand Congress to Reject Nuclear Bailout

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Thirteen environmental and consumer watchdog organizations representing millions of members today [sent a letter](#) to the House of Representatives urging members to oppose bill [H.R. 1551](#), which aims to bail out the nuclear industry after troubled investments in new reactor projects in the southern U.S.

Last week, H.R. 1551, a bill to amend the IRS code and modify tax credits to nuclear power facilities, passed the House Ways and Means Committee by voice vote. House leadership placed this controversial, fast-tracked legislation on the suspension calendar for this week and the bill is expected to be brought to the floor today.

The legislation comes as Southern Company and SCANA push to get the government, via U.S. taxpayers, to foot even more of the bill for the utilities' failed bet on nuclear reactors. The projects have been beset by extreme cost overruns and completion schedules have doubled. Westinghouse's decision to construct four new nuclear reactors for utilities in Georgia and South Carolina has not only bankrupted the company, but also placed its parent company, Toshiba, in an extremely precarious financial position. If enacted, this bill would grant an additional \$2.6 billion to the failing projects by making tax-exempt co-owners eligible for federal tax credits, and permitting them to transfer the credits to for-profit corporations.

"These four reactors, two at Southern Company's Plant Vogtle and two at SCANA's V.C. Summer, have been under construction since 2009 and were supposed to be operational by now, but are nowhere near complete," **said Ben Schreiber with Friends of the Earth.** "Both projects have already benefitted from state and federal incentives, yet their customers have suffered from rising electric bills. There is no reason to burden these customers further or make U.S. taxpayers shoulder any more of the costs for these failed experiments. Congress should ensure the utilities' shareholders take on some of the risk, not assure yet another multi-billion dollar taxpayer-financed nuclear bailout."

The [letter](#) explains that:

The failures to bring any of the four reactors online within the fifteen-year period of the tax credit program demonstrates that the technology is an even greater failure than the first generation of reactors, and it will never be widely commercialized. It is simply not a justified or worthy investment of taxpayers' money to grant the owners of these reactors the extraordinary relief of billions of dollars in subsidies for projects that hold no promise for the U.S. energy sector. It should not be forgotten that Southern Company's expansion of Plant

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expansion of Plant Vogtle has already received substantial taxpayer support through the \$8.3 billion in federal nuclear loan guarantees and the public/private cost-sharing support during the permitting and licensing process.

“We urge Congress to give the American people a break and stop throwing billions of dollars in wasteful and ineffective subsidies at these boondoggle nuclear projects,” **said Tim Judson, executive director of the Nuclear Information and Resource Service.** “The industry promised that \$20 billion in loans and payouts from taxpayers would revive nuclear power and lead to a 'Nuclear Renaissance.' But all that money and more has only managed to get four reactors less than half-built in ten years, and bankrupted their manufacturer with billions of dollars in cost overruns. Not passing this bill will save taxpayers at least \$5 billion dollars. It's time for Congress to give the American people a break.”

[Find the letter here.](#)

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*Friends of the Earth* fights to create a more healthy and just world. Our current campaigns focus on promoting clean energy and solutions to climate change, ensuring the food we eat and products we use are safe and sustainable, and protecting marine ecosystems and the people who live and work near them.

Founded in 1978, **Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS)** is the information, networking and outreach center for organizations and individuals concerned about nuclear power, radioactive waste, radiation and sustainable energy issues. NIRS works to advance the transition to clean, efficient, renewable energy; advocates for responsible and environmentally just solutions to radioactive and toxic waste; and fights to protect the public from the effects of radioactive contamination. We provide policy expertise and informational resources on energy and radioactive waste, and monitor policy developments on the national and state levels.

Founded in 1985, the **Southern Alliance for Clean Energy** promotes responsible energy choices that work to address the impacts of Global Climate Change and ensure clean, safe, and healthy communities throughout the Southeast. Learn more at [www.cleanenergy.org](http://www.cleanenergy.org).

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