



# NUCLEAR INFORMATION AND RESOURCE SERVICE

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## NEWS FROM NIRS

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### **New Baucus tax proposal takes an Orwellian approach: would redefine dirty energy as clean**

The nation's leading tax code writer, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT), Wednesday unveiled a radical proposal to revise the nation's energy policy through the tax code.

The draft bill introduced by Sen. Baucus would end forty-two different tax incentives for the energy industry, projected to cost \$150 billion. In their place, it would create "technology-neutral" incentives for energy projects that meet a narrow standard for carbon emission reductions. However, the bill would also end incentives that promote energy efficiency improvements and zero-emissions vehicles, by definition two of the most effective ways to reduce greenhouse gases. At the same time, by focusing solely on carbon, Sen. Baucus's proposal would continue to subsidize other toxic and polluting energy sources, such as nuclear power and natural gas.

"I think they coined the phrase 'throwing the baby out with the bath water' just for ideas like this," said Tim Judson, NIRS' Associate Director. "Tax breaks for the oil and coal industries are irresponsible, unnecessary and counterproductive, but so are subsidies for nuclear power and natural gas. Cutting tax breaks to help people make their homes more energy efficient and giving those dollars to companies to make radioactive waste is simply wrong-minded and counter-productive."

"We're getting a little tired of politicians, not to mention self-serving industries, who argue that the only pollutant of concern in the world is carbon," said Michael Mariotte, executive director of NIRS. "Nuclear power inherently brings with it plutonium, strontium, cesium and the whole alphabet soup of poisonous radionuclides that are released routinely into

our air and water; that form one of our world's largest unsolved environmental problems—safely managing radioactive waste; and that can at any moment be unleashed in a catastrophic accident.”

“Our climate condition *is* a crisis,” Mariotte added. “But the solution is not to subsidize dirty energy technologies, nor try to portray them as somehow clean. It’s really not hard: we need to renew the tax credits for genuinely clean renewable energy sources like wind and solar, provide greater encouragement for energy efficiency measures, incentivize distributed generation—especially rooftop solar; and support already rapidly-improving energy storage. The clean energy technologies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that can quickly and affordably reduce carbon emissions are here: it’s time to take advantage of them.