



# THE WEEKLY CLOSER

U.S. SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE  
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## THE WEEK IN REVIEW...

- [Expanding Nuclear Energy Is A Move We Must Commit To](#) (*The Hill*, By Senator James M. Inhofe)

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

- [Chill Out Over Global Warming](#), (By David Harsanyi *Denver Post* Staff Columnist)
- [Heads In The Sand - And Proud Of It; Energy Protesters Oppose Real Solutions](#) (*Rocky Mountain News* Editorial)

## NEXT WEEK

[June 14, 2006](#)

Full committee oversight hearing to consider whether potential liability deters abandoned hard rock mine clean up.

9:30 am

SD-628

[June 15, 2006](#)

Subcommittee on Superfund and Waste Management hearing to

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK...

“In this view, oil and coal are bad. So is natural gas, which until recently environmentalists lauded because it burns cleanly. And nuclear power. These folks seem to have problems with any energy source that sustains contemporary civilization. But the only realistic way to pursue energy independence is to produce more here. And restricting access to domestic fuels drives up the price. This stifles the economic growth that allows investments that would bring renewable energy to market sooner, too. So an allegedly green policy winds up the enemy of clean fuels.”

Editorial  
*The Rocky Mountain News*  
June 2, 2006

## EXPANDING NUCLEAR ENERGY IS A MOVE WE MUST COMMIT TO

By Senator James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.)  
*The Hill*

June 7, 2006

“For the sake of economic security and national security, the United States of America must aggressively move forward with the construction of nuclear power plants,” President Bush recently said in a speech.

The president is right, and Congress agrees.

As chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, and a member of the committee since 1995, I have worked closely with my committee members to write essential legislation and increase critical oversight to ensure the development of a safe, secure and affordable nuclear energy future for our country.

## EPACT '05

I worked closely with Sen. George Voinovich (R-Ohio), chairman of Subcommittee on Clean Air, Climate Change and Nuclear Safety, to write three nuclear bills, which were included in the Energy Policy Act of 2005, or EPACT '05, to provide for the safe and secure growth of nuclear power. The Environment and Public Works Committee and the Energy and Natural Resources Committee worked together to develop a comprehensive approach

conduct oversight of the Superfund Program.

9:30 am

SD-628

## EPW RESOURCES

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toward the resurgence of nuclear power in the United States.

The committees worked collaboratively to address the critical provisions needed for a nuclear renaissance. These include Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) human-capital provisions, enhanced security around nuclear plants, liability and risk insurance, production tax credits and loan guarantees to provide the foundation for construction of new nuclear plants. Because of these, nine generating companies and consortiums across the United States are preparing applications for permission to build between nine and 19 new nuclear power plants.

If all 19 are built, they would generate between 20,000 and 25,000 megawatts of new electricity by 2020. Those plants would also create tens of thousands of construction jobs and approximately 10,000 high-paying, high-tech plant-operation jobs. One plant is capable of providing the entire electricity needs of an average U.S. city.

Now the NRC will have to do its part to provide a stable and predictable licensing process. The key is regulatory certainty. The potential number of applications, the interaction of the various types of approvals, the potential for duplication of efforts and the need to coordinate the development of new regulations and regulatory guidance with the industry's license application preparation work all pose substantial challenges.

Through our oversight efforts, which began in 1997, the NRC moved to a risk-based decision process. The relicensing process had been estimated to take between five and 10 years. By concentrating on risks, they shortened the period to less than two years. They need to apply the same concepts to the licensing of new facilities.

As chairman of the committee that oversees the NRC, I am committed to ensuring that the NRC obtains the resources necessary to do its job. I am confident that the NRC can and will exercise its independent health and safety responsibilities without stifling the rebirth of nuclear power in this country.

### **Opening Yucca Mountain**

Congress must solve the nuclear-waste issue, which appears to be more political than scientific.

Earlier this year, the Environment and Public Works Committee held its first ever hearing on the nation's first permanent high-level waste repository. Though nuclear waste is stored safely on sites around the country, the eventual disposition of this waste was slated to be at Yucca Mountain in accordance with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1987. Today, most of the scientific barriers surrounding the site have been adequately resolved, yet significant political barriers continue to prevent the site from opening.

After visiting this site, I strongly support the storage of nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain. More is known about Yucca Mountain than any other parcel of real estate on the planet. This knowledge extends well below the surface, through miles of tunnels and dozens of drillings. It has been confirmed in the

laboratory, reviewed by independent experts and validated against information from analogous sites around the world.

Through all that has been gained by 20 years and \$8.6 billion of world-leading scientific research, one thing has remained constant — the more we examine Yucca Mountain, the better it looks. There is certainly no scientific reason not to move directly forward with this project.

### **Moving Forward**

As chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, I will continue to work with my colleagues on the committee and with the Energy Committee, along with the president, to work through the remaining issues to support increasing nuclear energy.

**[Click here for the Op/Ed.](#)**

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## **IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...**

### **CHILL OUT OVER GLOBAL WARMING**

By David Harsanyi  
Denver Post Staff Columnist

June 5, 2006

You'll often hear the left lecture about the importance of dissent in a free society.

Why not give it a whirl?

Start by challenging global warming hysteria next time you're at a lodo cocktail party and see what happens.

Admittedly, i possess virtually no expertise in science. That puts me in exactly the same position as most dogmatic environmentalists who want to craft public policy around global warming fears.

The only inconvenient truth about global warming, contends Colorado State University's Bill Gray, is that a genuine debate has never actually taken place. Hundreds of scientists, many of them prominent in the field, agree.

Gray is perhaps the world's foremost hurricane expert. His tropical storm forecast sets the standard. Yet, his criticism of the global warming "hoax" makes him an outcast.

"They've been brainwashing us for 20 years," Gray says. "Starting with the nuclear winter and now with the global warming. This scare will also run its

course. In 15-20 years, we'll look back and see what a hoax this was."

Gray directs me to a 1975 Newsweek article that whipped up a different fear: a coming ice age....

Thank god they did nothing. Imagine how warm we'd be?

Another highly respected climatologist, Roger Pielke sr. At the University of Colorado, is also skeptical.

Pielke contends there isn't enough intellectual diversity in the debate. He claims a few vocal individuals are quoted "over and over" again, when in fact there are a variety of opinions...

Gray acknowledges that we've had some warming the past 30 years. "I don't question that," he explains. "And humans might have caused a very slight amount of this warming. Very slight. But this warming trend is not going to keep on going. My belief is that three, four years from now, the globe will start to cool again, as it did from the middle '40s to the middle '70s."

Both gray and Pielke say there are many younger scientists who voice their concerns about global warming hysteria privately but would never jeopardize their careers by speaking up.

"Plenty of young people tell me they don't believe it," he says. "but they won't touch this at all. If they're smart, they'll say: 'I'm going to let this run its course.' it's a sort of mild McCarthyism. I just believe in telling the truth the best i can. I was brought up that way."

So next time you're with some progressive friends, dissent. Tell 'em you're not sold on this global warming stuff...

Click [HERE](#) for the full text of the column.

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## HEADS IN THE SAND – AND PROUD OF IT

Energy protesters oppose real solutions

June 2, 2006

At a press conference Wednesday at the state Capitol, the group Environmental Action marked Dependence Day, "the day when the United States effectively runs out of domestic oil and must rely completely on foreign imports for the remainder of the year."

The idea is that the United States produces 41 percent of its oil, enough to supply Americans for only five months a year. We import the rest. Our economic vitality could indeed be held hostage by unfriendly or unstable foreign suppliers of this crucial energy source.

But there is good news. Untapped, domestic offshore reserves of crude oil and

natural gas could help fuel the nation for decades. There may be enough new natural gas offshore to satisfy demand (at today's level) for 18 years. Unfortunately, Environmental Action wants no new fossil fuels. Instead, the group demands higher fuel-economy standards, more alternative energy and, of course, expanded mass transit.

In this view, oil and coal are bad. So is natural gas, which until recently environmentalists lauded because it burns cleanly. And nuclear power. These folks seem to have problems with any energy source that sustains contemporary civilization.

But the only realistic way to pursue energy independence is to produce more here. And restricting access to domestic fuels drives up the price. This stifles the economic growth that allows investments that would bring renewable energy to market sooner, too. So an allegedly green policy winds up the enemy of clean fuels.

About one-fourth of U.S. oil and natural gas comes from offshore wells. But Congress and the White House have blocked any new drilling since 1981. The ban lasts until 2012.

Set aside worries about oil spills, and consider natural gas, which supplies 63 percent of the energy used by American households. Platforms can easily be built miles offshore, invisible to beachcombers. And the risks of environmental damage from a gas well failure are negligible; it's a gas, after all.

Who could possibly oppose a move to tap that clean energy?

Short-sighted lawmakers and hidebound greens, that's who. Last month, the House refused to repeal the ban on offshore gas drilling, 203-217. The vote was largely symbolic, since the Senate would have to agree and then persuade President Bush to repeal his executive order early.

Even so, two of Colorado's three House Democrats, Diana DeGette, 1st District, and Mark Udall, 2nd District, voted to keep the moratorium in place. (John Salazar, 3rd District, backed energy production.)

We asked Udall and DeGette if there were any circumstances that might persuade either to support new offshore wells.

Probably not. Spokesmen from both offices said America needs to be weaned from fossil fuels.

There you have it. Environmentalists and sympathetic lawmakers are less worried about foreign oil than they are about oil (and natural gas), period. Such obstructionism not only burdens the economy, it also delays the transition to high-tech, cleaner fuels. Some bargain.

Click [HERE](#) for the full text of the editorial.

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Matthew Dempsey, Press Secretary

