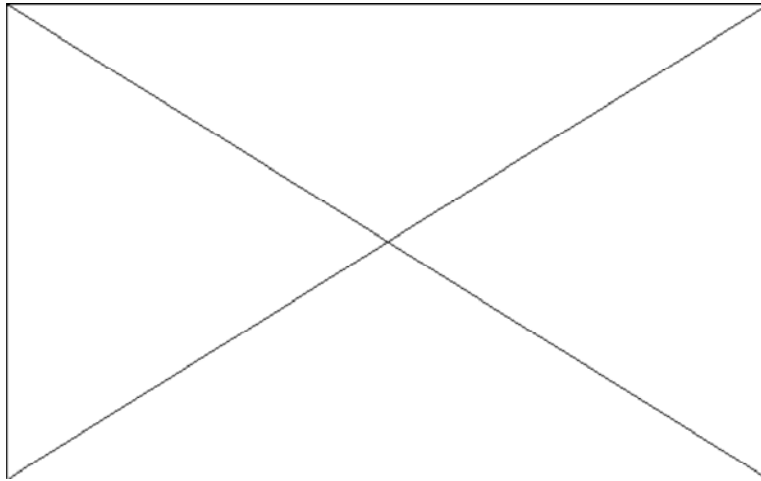


**Shopping For Solar Panels?**  
Continue

## Nuke energy bills fuel energized debate at Missouri Capitol

March 10, 2011 | Filed under: [Featured](#), [Regulation](#) | Posted by: [Tim Sampson](#)



JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – A Senate committee tasked with considering two different options on how the state might proceed in permitting a site for a second nuclear power plant in Callaway County, drew dozens of witnesses and wore on late into the evening Wednesday, as supporters and opponents clashed on the issue of consumer protections.

The two bills would each allow a consortium of energy companies to finance pre-construction costs of a new nuclear power generator by raising Missouri utility customers' rates before the project is complete. One bill would cap the total cost the companies could reap at \$45 million to develop the project, while a compromise bill would cap potential earnings at \$40 million and transfer more revenue to the Office of Public Council within the Public Service Commission, which acts as an advocate for Missouri rate payers.

"A site permit is a valuable asset for the state," said Ameren Missouri Chief Executive Warren Baxter, the leader of the group looking to establish the state's first new nuclear plant in decades. "Recognizing the site permit will be on Ameren property, it is certainly a valuable site for my company, but I believe it is also a valuable asset for the state of Missouri."

The site permit would give the energy companies 20 years to build the new plant, which they estimate could create about 3,000 construction jobs and an additional 8,000 jobs through subcontractors, retailers and other supporting businesses. Once complete, the plant would employ about 420 part-time workers.

But Baxter said the biggest benefit would be to Missourians. He and other energy leaders said nuclear power would supply the state with a steady supply of clean energy while exploring other alternative energy options. He said the plant would help keep cost low for Missourians, who enjoy the seventh lowest utility rate structure in the country.

But some are wary of passing cost along to consumers. That is why Sen. Jason Crowell, R-Cape Girardeau, last week introduced a compromise proposal, SB406, to lower the overall amount to \$40 million that the companies could reap from their customers for the project before its completion and increase funding to the Office of Public Counsel to help make sure customers are treated fairly and can recoup money if a plant never comes to fruition.

Joan Bray, chair of the Consumers Council of Missouri, said her group did not like the notion of the site permit, which would overturn a long-standing law passed by voters that prohibits energy customers from paying for a facility until it is operational. But she conceded that it would be better to have consumer protections if the bill is going to proceed onward.

"We live in political reality," Bray said. "We understand that Ameren is powerful and can get things done in the Capitol," she said.

### Latest News

- [Farm Bureau advocates for ethanol tax credit continuation](#)
- [EPA says no contamination in Mississippi flood water](#)
- [Akin refuses to back away from controversial comment](#)
- [Social Services Director resigns](#)
- [Flood means big losses for Missouri agriculture](#)

ClearEdge | rows  
**ClearEdge5**  
11x more productive than solar  
[Learn more](#)

### Flickr Photo Stream



The energy consortium behind the project has favored the more lenient version of the site permit bill.

Still others who testified before the Senate committee opposed the project all together. Representatives from the Sierra Club and other environmentalist organizations warned of potentially harmful impacts to the environment that could result from nuclear energy. Others said that nuclear energy has failed as a viable energy option, and that it could only exist with government subsidies and allowances like the one being debated in Missouri's Legislature.

"Around the United States, where energy markets are competitive, new nuclear construction has failed as an energy option do to the billions of dollars in construction cost and the incredibly high risk of cost overruns and delays," said Ed Smith of the Missouri Coalition for the Environment.

The Senate committee did not take any action on either bill. Similar legislation is currently working its way through the House of Representatives.

**Related posts:**

- [Callaway 2 Hearing Draws Large Crowd, Diverse Opinions](#)
- [Bill Boosting Nuclear Plant Begins Legislative Path](#)
- [New Nuclear Effort Unites Utilities, Government Leaders; Consumer Questions Remain](#)
- [Missouri Renewable Energy Mandate in Limbo](#)
- [State Utilities Face New Renewable Energy Standards](#)



Posted by Tim Sampson on March 10, 2011. Filed under Featured, Regulation. You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2.0. You can leave a response or trackback to this entry



Switch to clean, renewable solar energy. Start for as low as \$0

**Leave a Reply**

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked \*

Name \*

Email \*

Website

**Comment**

You may use these HTML tags and attributes: <a href="" title=""> <abbr title=""> <acronym title=""> <b> <blockquote cite=""> <code> <del datetime=""> <em> <i> <q cite=""> <strike> <strong>

**Find Us Online**



**Subscribe by Email**

Enter your email

**Get the Missouri News Horizon Widget**

**Tags**

Budget budget cuts business Chris Kostercity Claire  
 McCaskillcountry Dick Aldrich Disaster/Accident economy education  
 featured General Assembly governor House Illinois Jay  
 Nixon Jefferson City joe jordan jordan Kansas legislature Linda



LuebberingMedicaidMissouri Missouri News HorizonMissouri  
 Rivermoney nebraska-watchdog news news &  
 politicsNixonpermanent-link public safetyRebecca TownsendRobin  
 CarnahanRoy BluntSenatestate Steven TilleytennesseeU.S. Environmental  
 Protection AgencyUniversity video watchdog