

New User? Register | Sign In | Help

Make Y! Your Homepage

Yahoo! Mail

YAHOO! NEWS

Search

Web Search

HOME U.S. BUSINESS WORLD ENTERTAINMENT SPORTS TECH POLITICS SCIENCE HEALTH OPINION MOST POPULAR

Science Video Weather News Space & Astronomy Animals & Pets Dinosaurs & Fossils Biotech Energy Green

News Search

TRENDING NOW: ryder cup tiger woods bishop eddie long osama bin laden china



ASK AMERICA

Do you want your state to adopt an immigration law like Arizona's?

Germany: Greens See Red Over Nuclear Power Extension

Buzz up!

By TRISTANA MOORE / BERLIN – Wed Sep 29, 11:50 am ET

Going against massive public opposition, the German cabinet on Tuesday gave the green light to extend the nation's use of nuclear power. Hailing the move earlier as a "revolution," Chancellor Angela Merkel claimed that nuclear power will serve as a "bridge technology," in order to give Germany more time to expand its production of renewable energy sources. But it could also give Merkel a headache, as the proposed extension sets the government on a collision course with political parties, environmental groups and the public.

If the proposal is approved by the German legislature, the operating life of Germany's 17 nuclear reactors would be extended by an average of 12 years beyond its originally planned phase-out. The reactors were due to be closed by 2022, according to a previous agreement hammered out almost a decade ago by a coalition of Social Democrats and Greens. Now, the nuclear power plants would be allowed to run until 2036, though some experts predict the reactors will stay open even longer. ([See a timeline of nuclear disarmament.](#))

In a sign of growing public fury, several hundred anti-nuclear protesters gathered outside Merkel's office on Tuesday morning. "The nuclear power extension is a disaster for Germany - it increases the risk of nuclear accidents and will produce far more dangerous radioactive waste," says Tobias Münchmeyer, the Berlin-based energy expert at Greenpeace. With surveys suggesting that a majority of Germans support an immediate shutdown of all of the country's reactors, Münchmeyer says the decision shows Merkel's center-right coalition to be "far removed from reality ... The four energy giants have been given a billion-dollar present."

The German government says the deal would bring in \$40 billion in taxes and levies from the nuclear industry. The four main utilities, E.ON, RWE, EnBW and Vattenfall, would have to pay a new tax on nuclear-fuel rods from 2011 until 2016, which is expected to raise up to \$3 billion each year. And on top of that, the companies would have to make contributions to a government-run fund for developing renewable energy. ([See why Germany is a nation in conflict.](#))

The cabinet also approved a new "energy concept" on Tuesday, which includes ambitious targets for drawing more power from renewable energy, modernizing power grids, and improving efficiency by 2050. The government wants greenhouse-gas emissions to be cut by 80% by 2050, and for 60% of the country's energy needs to come from renewable sources by then, up from 16% today. Merkel was adamant that the new energy plan would provide a role model for climate-change action: "If we don't lead the way, we won't be able to convince other countries to take responsibility as well."

But most Germans aren't convinced, and the news that the cabinet was considering a nuclear extension has given new momentum to the nation's strong anti-nuclear movement, which dates back to the 1970s. Recently, campaigners have stepped up their protests at the controversial nuclear-waste depot in Gorleben, Lower Saxony. And on Sept. 18, up to 100,000 Germans marched through Berlin to vent their anger at the nuclear extension, shouting slogans like "Stop nuclear power now!" Environmental activists say the move to delay the shutdown of nuclear reactors will slow down the development of renewable energy - and that the current demonstrations are just the beginning. "There'll be so many protests this autumn that Chancellor Merkel's government will soon realize it doesn't have public support for its nuclear course," Jürgen Trittin, parliamentary leader of the Green party, told reporters. "This is a dirty deal with the nuclear industry."

The nuclear issue has galvanized support for the Green party, which has grown to be a major force in national politics. "Some polls put the Greens on a par in popularity with the Social Democrats at around 20% - that's unprecedented in German history," says Dieter Rucht, professor of sociology at Berlin's Social Science Research Centre. Rucht points out that the Greens have capitalized on anti-nuclear protests, and believes the center-right coalition has underestimated the level of public anger around nuclear energy. "Older, experienced activists from the 1970s and '80s have joined younger protesters and grassroots networks," he says. "There's

MOST POPULAR ON GREEN



Buy this, not that

Ever get confused about what to buy that's best for you? Get the answers.



Simple savings

Find easy things other people are doing to save money.



World's strangest homes

Check out houses made of caves, shipping containers, and more.

[More from Yahoo! Green »](#)

sponsored links

Mortgage Rates Hit 3.25%

If you owe less than \$729k you probably qualify for Obamas Refi Program
www.SeeRefinanceRates.com

Sacramento Jobs

493 New Sacramento Jobs \$12-\$127/Hour.
View All Jobs.
SacramentoJobs.LocalJobsFind.net

Buy Stocks - \$4 Fee at ShareBuilder

No account or investment minimums. No inactivity fees. Start today.
www.sharebuilder.com

Featured



Learn. Listen. Be Heard

Join the Web's social-media hub for the 2010 election.
» [Cast your votes](#)



Pay gap

Census data: Women earn less than men in every state.
» [More from ABC News](#)

[Watch Who Knew?:](#)

a tough and united opposition to nuclear power and Chancellor Merkel may pay a high political price." (See if Germany's government is headed for a breakdown.)

The new energy bill is due to get its first reading in the Bundestag, Germany's lower house of parliament, on Oct. 1. There's debate over whether it also needs to go through the Bundesrat, the upper house of parliament, where the government no longer has a majority. If the coalition manages to bypass the Bundesrat, as it hopes to, opposition parties and Greenpeace have another plan up their sleeves - they're preparing to mount a legal challenge in the Federal Constitutional Court. With the government's approval ratings already at rock bottom, Merkel can't afford to make Germany's green movement red with rage.

[See the top 10 female leaders.](#)

[See pictures of the dangers of printing money in Germany.](#)

View this article on [Time.com](#)

Related articles on Time.com:

- [Opposition to Nuclear Power Losing Steam in Germany](#)
- [Fight over Tax Cuts Looms for Merkel](#)
- [Will German Austerity Help or Hurt the Global Recovery?](#)
- [Is Germany's Government Headed for a Breakdown?](#)
- [Germany's Election: Merkel's Legacy and Economic Policy](#)

Follow Yahoo! News on [Twitter](#), become a fan on [Facebook](#)

[Buzz up!](#)



There's a new way to get the news. [» More Who Knew? videos](#)



Top Stories on Facebook
Are you on Facebook? Join our page for top stories! [» Join our Facebook page here](#)

Explore Related Content

Utah: Red rocks meet the greens ...

- While St. George previously attracted primarily snow birds, it now also lures ... [Full Story »](#)
Chicago Tribune



Photo in Slideshow: [Angela Merkel](#), [Christian Wulff](#)



Photo: U.S. seen losing [renewable energy](#) race to Asia



Article: Obama promotes clean energy; GOP hits Dem spending ... [Solar energy](#)
AP

More on Nature & Environment

[Europe, Asia leaders gather as Japan-China row lurks](#)
AFP

[Climate talks put top emitter China in hot seat](#) Reuters

[Obama promotes clean energy; GOP hits Dem spending](#)
AP

[More »](#)

More...

Science Video: [Going Home: Next Generation of Tech Workers](#) ABC News

Science Video: [New planet could support life](#) Reuters

Science Video: [Trackways Monument](#) Assignment Earth

17 Comments

Show:

[Post a Comment](#)

Comments 1 - 10 of 17 [First](#) | [Prev](#) | [Next](#) | [Last](#)

BOSSK Thu Sep 30, 2010 07:17 am PDT | [Report Abuse](#) 2 0
Nuclear = \$
Greens = \$

Locutus Of Borg Wed Sep 29, 2010 06:44 pm PDT | [Report Abuse](#) 0 0
What REALLY needs to be done is a major push for the developement of Nuclear Fusion, the power of the stars. The power output of the sun in one second is more than has been used by humanity in its existance. It would be clean, safe, and with no radioactive waste. WE ARE SO CLOSE!!!! The country that develops it first will have the world by the you know whats. Fission is a transistion

only. They can be made safer, and if we reprocess the waste then we have more fuel to use. Its the people who are scared of terrorists getting thier hands on it is why we don't do it.

MortalOne Wed Sep 29, 2010 03:08 pm PDT | [Report Abuse](#)

4 1

I want to go back to my ancestral land (Germany) after I graduate from college with a bachelor's degree in nuclear engineering. I have spent a lot of time looking over this matter, and though I agree that the reactors there are slightly mismanaged and have had many issues, the answer is better science, better management, and better engineering, not no nuclear power. If Deutschland will give nuclear power a chance, they'll have clean, efficient energy. Don't listen to these bozos, do what makes sense, keep these reactors running, make more, and in doing so attract nuclear engineers and technicians from around the world to the prospect of working with nuclear power in Germany.

CIGARHEAD Wed Sep 29, 2010 02:15 pm PDT | [Report Abuse](#)

7 1

Nuclear power makes the most sense for very large amounts of electrical generation. If it's built correctly and maintained properly, a nuclear power plant does the best job.

Friendly Joe Wed Sep 29, 2010 02:12 pm PDT | [Report Abuse](#)

7 2

The Greens are a religious sect, not a political party. Only fools take them seriously. Nuclear plants are the only immediate alternative to fossil energy.

Mister ED Wed Sep 29, 2010 01:48 pm PDT | [Report Abuse](#)

4 0

Uranium : not just for bombs anymore !!!

The first and only green energy idea !!!

Emmag Wed Sep 29, 2010 01:43 pm PDT | [Report Abuse](#)

2 5

Germany has the same problem we do. Shutting down nuclear plants isn't as easy as flipping a switch and walking away. Most of our plants were built in the 70s with a lifespan of 30yrs. Nearly all of them are still operational, some despite massive cracks and a history of leaking radioactive material in things like rivers. We can't close them because dismantling them is really expensive and we have no where to put the highly radioactive waste. So we give them taxpayer money to do minor upgrades and hope it's enough and when one is finally closed we spend taxpayer money, tens sometimes a hundred billion dollars, for a single plant to clean it up. So tell me again how nuclear power is "cheap".

Testing123 Wed Sep 29, 2010 01:42 pm PDT | [Report Abuse](#)

6 2

so anti-nuclear protesters are against free clean power, instead of burning and being dependant on coal and oil?? That's a real bright bunch.

Testing123 Wed Sep 29, 2010 01:39 pm PDT | [Report Abuse](#)

4 6

anti-nuclear protesters are funded by big oil companies.

Yahoo User Wed Sep 29, 2010 01:38 pm PDT | [Report Abuse](#)

4 7

Read Nobel Peace Prize nominee Helen Caldicotts book "Nuclear Power is not the Answer" and have your mind blown.

The U.S. currently has NOWHERE to store or dispose of nuclear waste, and NEVER HAS.

Thousands of tons of highly radioactive waste continues to pile up around over 100 nuclear reactor sites in the U.S.


If if the U.S. did have a nuclear waste disposal site it would take an estimated THIRTY YEARS to transport the existing nuclear waste to the site.

Other countries involved in nuclear power have similiar, if not worse, nuclear waste disposal/storage problems.

Comments 1 - 10 of 17 [First](#) | [Prev](#) | [Next](#) | [Last](#)

Post a Comment

[Sign in](#) to post a comment, or [Sign up](#) for a free account.



Do you want your state to adopt an immigration law like Arizona's?

Most Viewed - Science

[Stem cell pioneer mentioned for Nobel Prize](#) AP

[Did UFOs Disarm Nuclear Weapons? And If So, Why?](#)
LiveScience.com

[Spacesuit Gloves Can Make Astronauts' Fingernails Fall Off](#)
SPACE.com

[China experts say panda suffocated to death in Japan: report](#) AFP

[Comet and Earth to Have Rare Close Encounter](#) SPACE.com

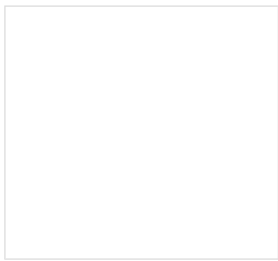
[All Most Viewed »](#)

Daily Features

[All Comics »](#)

Opinions & Editorials: Diverse views on news from the right, left, and center.

[All Opinion »](#)



More From



[The Bullying of Seth Walsh: Requiem for a Small Town Boy](#)

[Defying the Vatican, Catholic Women Claim Their Priesthood](#)