

DRAFT LETTER TO THE EDITOR - Arenberg

I believe that the Globe's article of April 11 with the headline, "N-power, gas tax lead Tsongas energy plan", reporting on the Massachusetts Plan which I presented at the University of Massachusetts the previous day, gives the readers the misimpression that nuclear power is the centerpiece of the plan.

The Massachusetts Plan is an effort to present a comprehensive program for the Commonwealth's economic survival during a period of ever-worsening energy price and supply problems. The most effective, economical and rapid way for the state to respond is clearly through increased energy efficiency and the use of renewable resources. Investments in these efforts stay in our state and should have priority over all other energy investments including nuclear. }


The specific proposals in the Massachusetts Plan range from _____ to _____. } I do not see nuclear power as a current proposal but as an issue that the state is likely to have to face in the mid- to late-1980's ^{when we can} ~~after we~~ assess our efforts to reduce electric demand and maximize alternative energy sources.

In order for the state to become relatively insulated from the effects of (embargos,) shutdowns, strikes, and (international energy supply interruptions) even after maximizing efforts in conservation and renewables, we will have to balance our reliance on imported oil, coal and nuclear sources. ^{to fill the mid term gap.} It will be necessary to weigh the short and long term costs of each option. Given the enormous climatic and social impacts of ^a massive increase in coal burning, including the CO₂ problem, acid rain and other factors, I believe that additional nuclear plants may be preferable for our region.

Therefore, I support keeping the nuclear option open. However, I do not support the construction of new nuclear plants now, nor do I favor construction at specific sites.

Before I would support a new nuclear facility, several prerequisites must be met. Efforts to reduce our energy use, increase efficiency of electric generation, and use of indigenous resources would have to be maximized. That would include the development of every practicable low-head hydro site; conversion of virtually all of our urban waste in resource recovery plants, cogeneration at every suitable industrial site, ^{total} management and use of waste and trash wood in industrial and utility boilers, aggressive residential and commercial conservation and solar programs with the goal of weatherizing and solarizing every home and business in the state.

Additionally, I believe that major government studies undertaken after the Three Mile Island accident make it clear that fundamental changes are necessary in the organization, procedures and attitudes of the nuclear industry and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission before nuclear energy is a viable option. I support changes which include: reorganization of the NRC to strengthen the focus on protection of public health and safety; incorporation of the lessons of Three Mile Island in all existing and new plants; expansion of the technical capability of utilities who operate nuclear plants; required evacuation plans; and a technical and political solution



to nuclear waste disposal problems. The industry and the NRC must adopt rather than resist these efforts if we are to make plants safer and reestablish the credibility of the NRC and restore public confidence. Given the instability of our oil supply and the global environmental risks of coal, we should take these steps to keep open the nuclear option.

During the next 20 years, we must take steps to diversify Massachusetts' energy base to minimize supply interruptions and to stem the flow of dollars out of our energy economy. In the short run, we must mount an all-out effort to reduce electric demand, manage electrical load better and tap indigenous renewable, decentralized sources.

In the long term, renewable resources and probably fusion power will supply most of our energy. But renewables can only provide one-fourth to one-third of our needs by the year 2000 and fusion will not be commercial by that time. While the Massachusetts Plan takes these realities into account and recognizes that in the mid-term, we may have to add some coal and nuclear capacity under stringent environmental, health and safety standards, in my own view, it distorts the thrust of the overall plan to focus news reports on the recommendation of maintaining the nuclear option.