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MAJOR FINDINGS REACHED IN THE KEYSTONE CENTER NUCLEAR POWER JOINT FACT-FINDING

The Keystone Center today released a report showing areas of agreement from a diverse – and perhaps surprising – group of stakeholders on the risks and benefits of nuclear power as they relate to climate change, safety and security, economics, waste, reprocessing and proliferation.

The Joint Fact-Finding on Nuclear Power reports conclusions from 27 participants associated with the nuclear industry, environmental groups, consumer advocates, government regulators, consultants, and academics. The group met from September 2006 through May 2007 and agreed on several critical issues, including:

- **Climate Change:** We considered hypothetical scenarios for nuclear expansion in order to better understand what role nuclear power might play in mitigating global climate change. In order to achieve a 25 gigatonne carbon reduction from nuclear power over 50 years (a Pacala/Socolow “wedge”), the nuclear industry would need to return immediately to the most rapid period of growth experienced in the past and sustain this growth rate. This projection is more ambitious than indicated by current announcements of proposed plant construction, and the group reached no consensus about the likely rate of expansion. In a carbon-constrained world, the relative economics of nuclear power will improve.
- **Economics:** A reasonable range for the cost of new nuclear power is between 8 and 11 cents per kilowatt hour delivered to the grid, based on “life cycle levelized costs.” While this value is significantly higher than many current vendor or government estimates, that is because our estimates are based on recent escalation in construction and raw material costs, which can be compounded in the future by tightness in the supply chain.
- **Safety and Security:** While plants have become safer in the decades since the Three-Mile-Island accident, public concern over plant security is greater today than it was before September 11, 2001. Principal concerns for U.S. nuclear power plants will continue to include aging equipment and materials and potential terrorist threats. Expansion in certain other countries raises concerns over construction practices; weaker operating, safety, and security cultures; and weaker regulatory oversight.
- **Waste:** Spent nuclear fuel must ultimately be placed in long-term disposal facilities. The best disposal option is deep underground geologic repositories, and suitable environments exist in the U.S. and the world. There is little confidence that the proposed repository at Yucca Mountain will meet its already delayed schedule. Given this experience, the search for a second or an alternative site would benefit from a different approach. Until an operating repository is available, older spent fuel can be stored safely and securely, on-site. Centralized interim storage is a reasonable alternative for managing waste from decommissioned plant sites.
- **Reprocessing:** The long-term availability of uranium at reasonable prices suggests reprocessing of spent fuel will not be cost-effective in the U.S. in the foreseeable future. A fuel cycle with reprocessing and any type of separation will still require a geologic repository for long-term management of nuclear waste.
- **Proliferation:** A principal proliferation concern is the possible diversion or theft of material from bulk fuel handling facilities (e.g., reprocessing, enrichment, mixed-oxide fuel fabrication, and plutonium storage) to develop nuclear weapons capability. Expansion of nuclear power in ways that substantially increase the likelihood of the spread of nuclear weapons is unacceptable.

- **The Global Nuclear Energy Partnership** (GNEP) was proposed in 2006 to help expand nuclear power in the U.S. and abroad. While the group agrees with several proliferation concerns that GNEP attempts to address, the program is not a credible strategy for resolving either the radioactive waste problem or the weapons proliferation problem. Critical elements of the program are unlikely to succeed.

“We congratulate the group for what it accomplished over many months of constructive work on these extraordinarily complex issues,” said Mike Hughes, vice president of The Keystone Center. “The debate about nuclear power has endured for decades, and is not likely to disappear soon. However, this group has found agreement on a number of critical issues, and has significantly narrowed differences on others, which should help Congress, the administration, and the public as they consider the future of nuclear power in this country.”

The Keystone Center is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1975 to help facilitate cross-sector dialogues on pressing environmental, energy, and public health issues. The Keystone Center does not take positions or advocate particular points of view. Instead, it convenes meetings on issues and facilitates practical, consensus-based solutions that break old logjams or that avert unnecessary future disputes over science and public policy. In addition to its work convening key leaders on nuclear power and climate change, The Keystone Center has engaged in dialogues on such timely public issues as the Endangered Species Act, pandemic flu preparation, federal facilities siting, mining clean-up, and childhood obesity.

The full text of the report and an executive summary can be viewed on The Keystone Center’s website (www.keystone.org.)

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Note: On the following page are the 27 participants in the Keystone Center’s Joint Fact-Finding on Nuclear Power and their personal endorsement of the report. Financial Support for this effort came from American Electric Power, Constellation Energy, Duke Energy, Entergy Corporation, Exelon, Florida Power & Light, General Electric, National Commission on Energy Policy, Nuclear Energy Institute, Pew Charitable Trusts, and Southern Company.

ENDORSEMENT

This report is designed to be an accurate portrayal of the NJFF group's discussions and joint findings. By endorsing this report, participants agree that they "generally support" the package of findings and the way the issues are described. To ensure an open and candid dialogue, participants presented their personal opinions in the Dialogue deliberations and not necessarily the official positions of their organizations. Therefore, the recommendations do not represent official government or organizational positions.

Name	Title	Organization
*Peter Bradford	President Vice Chair, Board of Directors Former NRC Commissioner	Bradford Brook Associates Union of Concerned Scientists
David Brown	VP for Federal Affairs	Exelon
Mark Brownstein	Managing Director, Business Partnerships	Environmental Defense
*Thomas Cochran	Director, Nuclear Program	Natural Resources Defense Council
*Armond Cohen	Executive Director	Clean Air Task Force
*Paul Genoa	Director, Policy Development	Nuclear Energy Institute
Victor Gilinsky	Energy Consultant Former NRC Commissioner	
Mike Godfrey	Environmental Affairs Manager	Southern Nuclear
Judi Greenwald	Director, Innovative Solutions	Pew Center on Global Climate Change
James Harding	Energy Consultant Former Director of Power Supply and Forecasting	Seattle City Light
Randy Hutchinson	Sr. VP, Business Development	Entergy Corp.
William Lanouette	Writer and public-policy analyst	
Allison Macfarlane	Assoc. Professor of Environmental Science and Policy	George Mason University
*Ted Marston	Principal	Marston Consulting
Chris Maslak	Marketing Program Manager	GE Energy – Nuclear
*Patrick Mazza	Research Director	Climate Solutions
*Brian Moline	Chairman	Kansas Corporation Commission
*Mano Nazar	Chief Nuclear Officer	American Electric Power
Brian O'Connell	Director, Nuclear Waste Program	National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners
Timothy Pettit	Director, Regional Communications and Public Affairs	Duke Power
*Sonny Popowsky	Consumer Advocate	Pennsylvania Office of Consumer Advocate
Vito Stagliano	Director of Research	National Commission on Energy Policy
Jonathan Temple	Energy Policy Analyst	British Embassy
Steve Ward	RGGI Advisor	Maine Department of Environmental Protection
	Former Public Advocate	Maine's Public Advocate
Greg White	Legislative Director	Michigan Public Service Commission
Michael Wilson	VP Government Affairs	FPL Group
Kurt Zwally	Manager, Global Warming Solutions	National Wildlife Federation
*Steering Committee		