

Towards a Nuclear-Free Canada

Despite 50-years of development and government support in Canada, nuclear power continues to be plagued by cost overruns, technical problems, accidents and the ongoing problem of how to manage its legacy of high-level nuclear waste,.

Having lost all credibility as a clean, cheap, safe and reliable energy source, it is doubtful that the nuclear industry will ever find the public will or private investor support to build another nuclear power plant in Canada. Survival for the Canadian nuclear industry depends on keeping its 22 aging CANDU reactors operating. But this will be no easy task – by 2020 all of Canada's nuclear reactors must be shut down, unless our governments choose to wager 20 to 30 billion dollars on risky reconstruction projects.

The Sierra Club of Canada works to encourage Canada to follow the lead of other nuclear dependant countries, such as Germany and Belgium, that have legislated the planned phase-out of their nuclear reactors in favour of green energy options and energy efficiency.

Like Canada, both Germany and Belgium are Kyoto signatories, but in spite of the nuclear industry's claim that nuclear power is a viable solution to climate change, these countries have recognized that you don't trade one environmental problem for another. Nuclear power is, in fact, in conflict with Canada's commitment to the Kyoto Protocol. Renewable energy and efficiency technologies are cheaper, cleaner and safer.

Canada needs to make a formal commitment to phasing out centralized nuclear power and coal stations, and assist in the orderly and just transition for power workers and their communities. By adopting a clear path to nuclear phaseout, Canada can send a strong message that it cares about the environment and that the market for green energy is open for business .