

Editor, Times-Dispatch:

Regarding Michael Stuart's letter of November 5th entitled "Virginia Waste won't fit at Nevada Site", I'd like to share a different viewpoint of the proposition that "nuclear power aids the environment". The writer advises that "a true environmentalist would take into consideration that the use of nuclear power in Virginia alone" would spare us the ill effects of fossil fuel-based emissions. This suggestion brings to mind one of the grandest farces of our times: that concern for air quality and global warming could be used to promote nuclear energy as part of our national energy policy. Furthermore, the notion that the extraction and processing of uranium into plutonium is "good" for humanity because a radioactive threat is relocated from its natural home to "safe" storage by humans is nothing short of scary. Plutonium is arguably the most horrific and dangerous material ever created (remember, it's ideal for making atomic weapons!). A mere four pounds of it spread evenly could quickly eradicate the human species.

As a 'true environmentalist', I see this as a mere substitution of one unsustainable system for another. The raw element required to produce nuclear energy (uranium) is an extremely finite resource. Therefore, even with government subsidies that far exceed those within the fossils fuels industry on top of high capital cost and relatively low operating efficiency, the reality of its poor economics will inevitably seal its fate. Moreover, this is an energy system so flawed in its design that it should require – in this age of terrorism - armed troops to guard both its produc-

tion and waste disposal side.

The fact is that all the energy we could ever need comes to us daily free of charge from a nuclear power plant a safe 93 million miles away. So, let's engage in practices that are truly good for us and our environment because, as Einstein once said, "a problem cannot be solved using the same mentality that created it".

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