

*Editor, Times-Dispatch:*

*The April 19 editorial "Thinking Locally", closed with the statement that "Virginia could do the most good by electing to federal office individuals who favor nuclear and other non-carbon energy sources", ostensibly as matter of dealing with the entwined issues of energy and global warming. To reiterate my message from a past letter, nuclear power is far from being a "non-carbon" or "zero-emissions" source!!! Aside from the untenable waste issues and the perpetual danger inherent to this system, the extraction, milling and leaching of uranium is one of the most destructive and energy-intensive processes in the entire mining industry - - with at least one study concluding that each unit of usable uranium extracted yields 20 units of CO2 emissions. Furthermore, the construction of these behemoth facilities involves massive quantities of heavily reinforced concrete, the prime component of which - - portland cement - - accounts for at least 5% of all CO2 output worldwide in its production. The same report also projected the likelihood that the average plant could be responsible for more emissions than it avoids over its entire operating life.*

*In order to honestly and effectively mitigate the atmospheric effects (and indeed all ecological depredation) of human activities, the dimensions of our focus on alternative "solutions" such as hybrids, EV's, solar, wind and even bio-fuels MUST expand to include the upstream aspects (i.e. embodied energy) of the whole life cycle, particularly if our goal is that increasingly popular destination known as "carbon-neutrality". So, rather than perpetuating half-truths based solely on the operations and downstream side, Virginia could do the most good by reflecting on Einstein's observation that "we cannot solve problems with*

*the same thinking used to create them".*