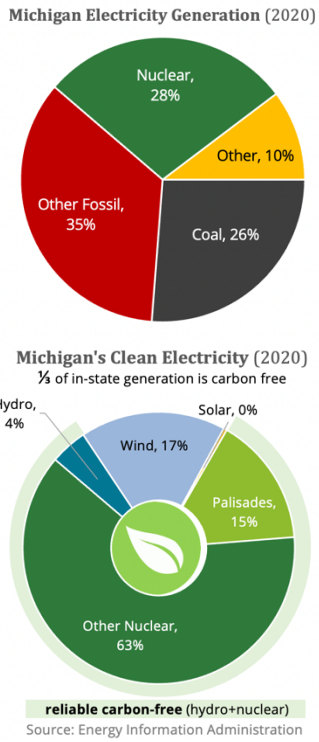
February 14, 2022

The Honorable Governor Gretchen Whitmer
The Honorable Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist II
All Michigan Elected Legislators



Dear Governor Whitmer, Lt. Governor Gilchrist and all Michigan Legislators,

We write you as a coalition of environmentalists, climate activists, scientific organizations, energy workers, entrepreneurs, and concerned citizens that cares deeply about mitigating climate change while ensuring human prosperity. We seek your assistance in preventing the *permanent* and *premature* closure of the Palisades nuclear plant in May 2022, nine years before its operating license expires in 2031. This single plant produces as much greenhouse gas free energy in a year as does all the wind and solar capacity in Michigan, 6.3 terawatt-hours. However, losing Palisades is worse than demolishing all renewable energy sources in Michigan: Palisades provides ⅕ of Michigan's firm reliable carbon-free electricity.

The closure of Palisades will directly undermine the MI Healthy Climate Plan's laudable goal for economy-wide carbon neutrality and may increase electricity cost to consumers. It will needlessly eliminate over 600 well-paying jobs, devastate the communities that host this plant, and diminish the state's economic vitality. We urge you to do whatever is needed to keep Palisades operational.

In recent years, wholesale electricity prices have declined significantly due to the shale boom. Gas sets the electricity price in deregulated markets, many of which do not sufficiently compensate the climate, reliability, and resiliency qualities of generation assets. These market failures are threatening the economic viability of nuclear, our largest source of carbon-free energy.

The federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal of 2021 provisioned $6 billion in the Civilian Nuclear Credit program to prevent premature retirement of existing zero-carbon nuclear plants. *We ask that you encourage and assist Entergy or any other plant owner, and Consumers Energy, the electric utility, in accessing this financial assistance to prevent plant closure, and to explore all other possibilities.* The 2017 business decision to close Palisades was apparently based on losses from short-term market conditions noted above. Since then, our climate priorities have become more urgent, and economic conditions have changed. We request that you provide administrative, regulatory, and financial support as needed to preserve this invaluable asset for Michigan and our nation.

Palisades prevents at least 4.7 million tonnes CO_2e emissions annually.[i] To ensure economy-wide decarbonization in a timely fashion, we cannot afford to lose any carbon-free energy. Some of the world's leading scientists, entrepreneurs and academics on climate science, marine biology, air pollution, energy, planetary science, and land conservation recently made a similar plea to preserve California's Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant.[ii]

The characteristics of nuclear power – like availability on demand, low land footprint, and the ability to locate plants anywhere – make it the logical partner for the ever-increasing use of solar and wind energy. As we electrify transportation, heavy industry, and heating, the reliability of the electric system becomes ever more paramount. The Environmental Defense Fund, Princeton, Stanford, and Clean Air Task Force showed that a carbon-free grid that includes firm energy sources like nuclear can cut ratepayer costs in half.[iii]

As already seen in California and Germany, renewables-only decarbonization approaches, coupled with shutting down nuclear power, result in exorbitant electric rates, grid instability, little reduction in fossil combustion, and even increased fossil-fuel dependence.[iv,v] All four of IPCC illustrative pathways consistent with a 1.5 ºC planet require 2050 nuclear generation to be 2x to 6x the 2010 level.[vi]

America's nuclear plants are among the best in the world. There is no technical reason that they cannot operate for decades more with good maintenance and replacement of reactor system components. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, responsible for the safe operation of U.S. nuclear generation, has permitted plants like Palisades to operate for 80 years, and is already considering life extensions out to 100 years. The institutional knowledge of workers and engineers who operate the existing fleet of reactors must be sustained.

Saving our existing nuclear plants is the simplest, cheapest, and most immediate action we can take to protect the global climate and Michigan communities harmed by air pollution. Preserving Palisades will reduce Michigan's herculean burden to build redundant generation, extra transmission lines, and energy storage infrastructure that would span millions of acres and cost billions of dollars.

Given the urgency of the situation, we cannot continue down the politically expedient path of allowing premature nuclear closures before successfully eliminating fossil combustion. Recognizing this, the Illinois legislature recently passed a comprehensive energy bill that preserved the Byron & Dresden nuclear plants.[vii] Pennsylvania successfully reversed the previously announced closure of Beaver Valley.[viii] Even groups previously skeptical of nuclear energy are calling to preserve built plants that operate safely.[ix] Michigan must take the courageous step to protect its existing nuclear assets to help displace all carbon-emitting sources.

We thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Signed,

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Control Room Supervisor (Retired)

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Virgil Fenn	**Thomas Kurhajetz**	**Doug Houseman**	**Matthew Chouinard**
Diane J. Reed	**Jean McCulloch**	**Kyle Vaughn**	**Bill Gogesch**

Current Supporter List: climatecoalition.org/sign-the-letter-to-save-palisades

CLIMATE COALITION

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U.S. Women in Nuclear

GENERATION ATOMIC

mothers for nuclear

D4NE

Doctors for Nuclear Energy

STAND UP FOR NUCLEAR

FOOTPRINT TO WINGS

GND

Campaign for a Green Nuclear Deal

Scientists for Accurate Radiation Information

Californians for green nuclear power

NUCLEAR FOR NET ZERO

Environmentalists For Nuclear Energy

MŁODZIEŻOWY STRAJK KLIMATYCZNY

Fridays for Future Poland

एनपीसीआईएल NPCIL

ATOMS IN THE SERVICE OF THE NATION

ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS

Anthropocene Institute

EMERGENCY REACTOR

eko-modernistit

NAYGN

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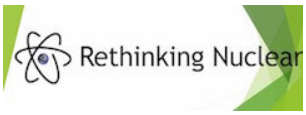
New York Energy and
Climate Advocates

California Clean
Energy Committee



Virginia Recycles
Spent Nuclear Fuel

Micro-Utilities, Inc

DEUTSCHER
ARBEITGEBER
VERBAND

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[i] Burning gas emits 758 g/kWh CO_2e life cycle GWP_{20}, at a 2.3% methane leak rate vs. 12 g/kWh from nuclear.

[ii] Save Clean Energy. Dear Governor Newsom. February 2022. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wpKHHQD9IVHDQOQPLMFYIHPt5x0kLm0_/view

[iii] EDF, Stanford University, Princeton University, Clean Air Task Force. California needs clean firm power, and so does the rest of the world. April 2021. https://www.edf.org/cleanfirmpower

[iv] Bryce. The High Cost of California Electricity Is Increasing Poverty. July 2020. https://freopp.org/the-high-cost-of-california-electricity-is-increasing-poverty-d7bc4021b705

[v] Pancevski & Kantchev. Germany's Reliance on Russian Gas Limits Europe's Options in Ukraine Crisis. January 2022. https://www.wsj.com/articles/germanys-reliance-on-russian-gas-limits-europes-options-in-ukraine-crisis-11642939203

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[vii] Exelon. Passage of Illinois Energy Legislation Preserves Nuclear Plants and Strengthens State's Clean Energy Leadership. September 2021. https://www.exeloncorp.com/newsroom/passage-of-illinois-energy-legislation-preserves-nuclear-plants-and-strengthens-states-clean-energy-leadership

[viii] Keep nuclear generation at current levels, says Pennsylvania climate plan. ANS Nuclear Café. September 2021 https://www.ans.org/news/article-3290/keep-nuclear-generation-at-current-levels-says-pennsylvania-climate-plan/

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