

Senators Patterson, Jelinek, Birkholz, Olshove, Van Woerkom and Cropsey offered the following concurrent resolution:

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 9.

A concurrent resolution to urge the United States Department of Energy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to do everything necessary to allow the Yucca Mountain repository to begin accepting high-level nuclear waste.

Whereas, Nuclear power has been, and likely will continue to be, a significant source for the nation's electricity. There are 104 operating nuclear power reactors in the United States, providing about a fifth of the nation's electricity generation. Nuclear power provided nearly 26 percent of the electricity generated in Michigan in 2006. Many electricity markets across the nation are, or will soon be, in need of new baseload generating capacity. Nuclear power provides large amounts of reliable, emission-free electricity at stable prices. Many policymakers recognize the need to construct new nuclear power plants; and

Whereas, In order to realize the many benefits of nuclear power, the nation must address the issue of high-level nuclear waste. Currently, approximately 60,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel are stored in pools or casks at temporary sites around the country, including in Michigan. More nuclear waste is generated every day; and

Whereas, In 2002, Congress and President Bush approved Yucca Mountain in Nevada as the site of a federal geologic repository for spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive defense waste. In 2008, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) accepted an application by the Department of Energy (DOE) to construct and operate the Yucca Mountain repository. The application is currently under technical review by the NRC; and

Whereas, The establishment of a national repository is more than ten years overdue. Under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, the DOE was supposed to begin accepting and storing the nation's nuclear waste by January 31, 1998. Electric rate-payers in Michigan and across the country have paid billions into the nuclear waste fund, which the DOE is supposed to use to open the repository; and

Whereas, The construction of new nuclear power plants, which are needed to provide clean and reliable baseload power, is being hampered by the unresolved issue of spent nuclear fuel. The NRC must work diligently to move the Yucca Mountain approval process along. The DOE must begin constructing and operating Yucca Mountain and begin accepting nuclear waste without further delay; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That we urge the United States Department of Energy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to do everything necessary to allow the Yucca Mountain repository to begin accepting high-level nuclear waste; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the United States Department of Energy, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.