

Nuclear Trending

Because of the “landmark but controversial clean energy bill,” as described on *The 21st Show’s* website, “nuclear power plants will be kept on line, and solar and wind developments will continue to grow, while coal and natural gas power plants are expected to gradually go off line. In the long term, Illinois’s electricity will be produced completely from clean sources by 2050.”

The host of the show, Brian Mackey, opened the segment with a sound bite from Illinois Gov. J. B. Pritzker’s press conference where he signed the legislation on September 15. Pritzker said that Illinois “is taking a giant step forward to mitigate the impacts of climate change and establish the most aggressive clean energy standards in the Midwest, supporting the creation of thousands of clean energy jobs.”

Mackey noted that while the legislation did have bipartisan support, the bill did not pass unanimously. Those opposed to it believe it will harm businesses and manufacturers, will cost downstate jobs, and will not end fossil fuel consumption. One

Republican senator said that while Illinois will decrease its carbon emissions, states like Indiana and Kentucky are still relying on coal plants. It was also noted that depending on who is doing the estimating, residents of Illinois could pay anywhere from \$2 to \$15 more per month for electricity.

After this setup, Mackey turned to the panelists and asked for their views on the legislation. While it is difficult to make progress with listeners about the benefits of nuclear in such a short segment, it was positive to hear the host and the panelists endorse keeping nuclear power plants on line (even as a bridge to more renewables, as begrudgingly stated by Walling). It was refreshing to hear from others outside the nuclear community that, realistically, there is no way to decarbonize and provide reliable power without nuclear, especially in Illinois, where nuclear currently produces over 50 percent of the state’s total net electricity generation.

For more in-depth coverage of the webinar go to ans.org/news/article-3264/. ☒



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