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For Immediate Release

Stop Hinkley welcomes Paris Agreement, but decries nuclear lobbying

The Stop Hinkley campaign has today welcomed news that a deal on tackling climate change is in sight at the Paris talks. However, lobbyists and nuclear industry champions have been in overdrive during the Conference.

Stop Hinkley Spokesperson, Alan Jeffery said:

“There seems to have been a desperate last-ditch effort in Paris to convince us all that nuclear power is an important part of the answer to the climate crisis with blatant attacks on those who envisage a future based on renewable energy without nuclear. (1) But the truth is that nuclear power is a dangerous distraction from what we really need to be doing. Because every pound spent on nuclear power could have been spent more effectively, making greater reductions in carbon emissions, nuclear is actually damaging efforts to tackle climate change.”

NASA scientist James Hansen was in Paris to berate climate campaigners for failing to support nuclear power. But Hansen ignores renewables and energy efficiency, setting up a false choice between fossil fuels and nuclear. (2) Hansen doesn't just want more nuclear power, but he wants next-generation nuclear power stations fuelled with weapons-useable plutonium, extracted from spent fuel in reprocessing plants like Sellafield, which runs the risk of more weapons proliferation problems in future. (3)

A big part of the pro-nuclear argument seems to be based on the idea that renewable energy currently provides only a tiny part of global electricity supply and cannot scale up rapidly enough to replace fossil fuels. Nuclear power, on the other hand, the argument goes, could do so. Hansen wants 115 new reactors to be built every year - yet the world has never built more than 40 a year. (4) Fortunately the concept of a world powered by 100% renewable energy is no longer seen as a pipedream but as a necessary and, more importantly, achievable goal at every level—from individuals to large corporations, and from small communities to large cities. (5)

Bill Gates also made headlines with his “Breakthrough Energy Coalition” fund to come up with new energy solutions, including “advanced” nuclear reactors. It's not that innovation is unwelcome, but the climate can't afford to hang around whilst we wait for “*Energy Miracles*”. As investment bank Goldman Sachs has pointed out we already have cost-effective and climate-effective technology available. What the climate really needs right now is the large-scale deployment of these existing technologies. Gates and his billionaires' club should be distributing funds to empower communities, and incentivize the massive deployment of energy efficiency and *existing* renewable technology now

rather waiting for miracles which might never happen, or will happen too late to make a difference.
(6)

Stop Hinkley Spokesperson, Alan Jeffery said:

“Even under EDF’s most optimistic scenario we will have to wait another decade for Hinkley Point C to contribute anything to reducing carbon emissions. And even then its effectiveness will be limited because of the vast amount of fossil fuels used to extract uranium from the ground. One recent study showed the nuclear life-cycle producing six times the carbon dioxide produced by wind and double what is produced by solar. (7) The UK is demonstrating to the rest of the world that nuclear power is too expensive and leads to the slashing of budgets for faster and much more effective ways of tackling climate change.”

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Notes

- (1) See Green World 30th Nov 2015 <http://safeenergy.org/2015/11/30/when-a-campaign-strikes-a-nerve/>
- (2) Ecologist 20th Nov 2015
http://www.theecologist.org/News/news_analysis/2986335/dont_nuke_the_climate_james_hansens_nuclear_fantasies_exposed.html
- (3) Guardian 3rd Dec 2015 <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/03/nuclear-power-paves-the-only-viable-path-forward-on-climate-change>
- (4) Green World 7th Dec 2015 <http://safeenergy.org/2015/12/07/the-nuclear-industrys-cop-21-dilemma/>
- (5) Ecologist 5th Nov 2015
http://www.theecologist.org/essays/2986169/a_clean_green_energy_future beckons.html and
Scientific American 19th Nov 2015 <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/139-countries-could-get-all-of-their-power-from-renewable-sources1/> and Sierra Club 4th Dec 2015
<http://www.sierraclub.org/compass/2015/12/ready-100-percent-clean-energy>
- (6) Inside Philanthropy 4th Dec 2015 <http://www.insidephilanthropy.com/home/2015/12/4/sorry-bill-gates-but-billions-for-energy-research-is-not-how.html>
- (7) Sovacool, B Valuing the greenhouse gas emissions from nuclear power: A critical survey, Energy Policy 36 (2008) 2950– 2963.