

SCR8, As Adopted by Senate, March 8, 2017

Senators Zorn, Proos, Colbeck, Bieda, Jones, Pavlov, Marleau, Stamas, Rocca and Horn offered the following concurrent resolution:

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 8.

A concurrent resolution to urge the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to fulfill their obligation to establish a permanent solution for handling high-level nuclear waste.

Whereas, Nuclear power has been a significant source of the nation's electricity production over the last four decades. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, nuclear power provided about 20 percent of the electricity produced in the United States in 2015, and Michigan's three nuclear power plants were responsible for about 26 percent of the electricity generated in the state; and

Whereas, Since the earliest days of nuclear power, determining how to deal with used nuclear fuel has been a great dilemma. Currently, more than 70,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel are stored in pools or casks at temporary sites around the country, including locations in Michigan. This high-level radioactive waste demands exceptional care in all facets of its storage and disposal, including transportation; and

Whereas, More than 30 years ago, Congress enacted the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 to address the long-term storage of nuclear waste. The act requires the federal government, through the Department of Energy, to build a repository for the permanent storage of high-level radioactive material from nuclear power plants and to begin accepting waste by January 31, 1998. It is now 2017, and the nation remains without a permanent repository, despite billions of dollars collected from electric ratepayers for the project; and

Whereas, The Department of Energy's National Laboratories have pioneered a method of recycling spent nuclear waste into fuel, known as pyrochemical processing, which could extend the productive life of uranium and cut down on nuclear waste. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission should prioritize the development and implementation of technical specifications and licensing requirements to enable the construction of Generation IV reactors capable of performing pyrochemical processing; and

Whereas, The federal government needs to build a permanent repository and promote the construction of pyrochemical processing facilities. Spent nuclear fuel continues to pile up at temporary sites around the country, and the ongoing problem of permanent disposal is an impediment to the potential of nuclear power to help meet our nation's energy needs. Our nation can only continue to safely store this waste at temporary sites for so long; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That we urge the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to fulfill their obligation, as provided by law, to establish a permanent solution for handling high-level nuclear waste; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Secretary 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.