

State Senator Robert Mayer The Mayer Memo

Senator Robert Mayer - Serving Butler, Dunklin, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Ripley, Stoddard & Wayne Counties



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Plug Pulled on Proposal to Require Consumers to Pay for Construction of New Nuclear Plant

Plans for constructing a second nuclear plant in Callaway County have been indefinitely suspended, which effectively halts proposed legislation under consideration in the General Assembly that would have allowed eligible power plants to charge customers through their utility rates for the cost of construction of certain types of clean energy plants.

The decision not to pursue building a new nuclear plant was announced by AmerenUE officials during a news conference on April 23. The public utility was seeking to repeal a 1976 law that prohibits utilities from charging the cost of building a new power plant to consumers until it starts to generate electricity. Two bills — [Senate Bill 228](#) and [House Bill 554](#) — were proposed to allow the company to increase its rates to pay for the financing costs of the \$6 billion project. It was the most controversial piece of legislation debated during this legislative session.

As you know, I opposed the bill's proposals because of the devastating financial impact it would have had across southeast Missouri on our residential consumers, our agricultural base, and to Noranda Aluminum in New Madrid County, one of our area's largest employers. The proposal would have increased cost of electricity and passed that cost onto customers. In addition, the risk of a failed construction project would have been just too much, particularly in these challenging economic times. It just wasn't the right thing to do.

I don't believe this shuts the door or ends the discussion on nuclear power in Missouri. We all understand the need to pursue more renewable sources of energy for a cleaner and safer environment and to meet our state's future energy demands — and we are doing this — but this proposal was too detrimental and did not provide enough consumer protections to get my vote.

As always, if you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at 1-877-291-5584.

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