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Ellen Pompper, Mayor Lower Alloways Creek New Jersey

Legislative Testimony Zero Emission Credits

February 2nd, 2021

Good morning. My name is Ellen Pompper, and I currently serve as mayor of Lower Alloways Creek Township, the proud host of the Salem and Hope Creek nuclear power plants for more than 40 years.

As a member of this small fraternity of American communities that are fortunate to host the nation's nuclear plants, I pay more attention than the average citizen to news about the struggles of the U.S. nuclear industry.

Merchant nuclear generators – that is to say, nuclear plants located in unregulated energy markets, like New Jersey – are struggling. Around the country, a number of nuclear plants have recently retired, including New Jersey's Oyster Creek nuclear plant in Lacey Township. I cannot fathom the affect to our Salem County community if that fate were to fall upon us. The economic ripple effect would be severe, but the human aspect would also be too much to bear.

Wherever a nuclear plant closes, a sad and destructive pattern reoccurs: Employment and average incomes fall, which means that tax revenues that fund schools, government services, roads and communities fall, too. Nuclear workers and their families leave in search of employment, which increases the number of houses on the market, which leads to lower property values. Local businesses suffer, too, as the temporary contractors hired for maintenance and refueling outages no longer come to town to rent rooms, eat at restaurants, buy groceries or fill their cars with gas.

Simply put, the economics would be staggering to us in South Jersey, but early retirement of the nuclear plants would also impact those up north and the State as a whole. There is simply no way the State can reach its clean energy goals without supporting its current nuclear plants. Nuclear remains the only viable carbon free energy source and will be for some time.

If you have concerns about costs, the Zero Emission Credits they are a relatively small portion of funds, as compared to the amount of funding that has supported the other carbon free alternatives.

The bottom line is this. We have a unique opportunity to support an economic engine while also supporting our environment at the same time. We must preserve the New Jersey's nuclear generation for our regional economy, local communities and regional environmental progress.

Thank you.

Ellen B. Pompper
Mayor of Lower Alloways Creek Township