

Faustian Fission, U.S. Senate Style

Background: Senator John Kerry (D-MA) convened a conference call On Oct. 27, with youth leaders of the climate protection movement from across the country. Sen. Kerry, as co-sponsor [along with Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chair Barbara Boxer](#) (D-CA) of the "[Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act](#)" (S. 1733), sought to "rally the troops" in support of this climate bill. Sen. Kerry tried to deflect criticism of [his advocacy of an expansion of nuclear power](#) in the bill by saying that, in order to get 60 votes to overcome an expected Republican filibuster, we need "to include the nuclear [power] piece, with proper controls, oversight, accountability, or you simply won't get 60 votes. Those things won't hurt us, because the free market will go for the fastest, cheapest technologies, wind, solar, energy efficiency, what's most affordable, makes the most sense. So don't worry about inclusion of these other things, because the free market will choose the winners."

Our View: If Sen. Kerry really believes what he is saying, we need to educate him on why he is wrong. [A \\$100 billion or more give-away of taxpayer funds to the nuclear power industry](#), which could easily happen considering the nuclear power title already included in S. 1733, would undermine those very market forces that Sen. Kerry thinks will help renewable sources such as wind and solar, as well as energy efficiency, to prevail as climate solutions -- [as they should](#). Of course, putting a price on carbon emissions would already benefit the nuclear power industry – just as it will help efficiency and renewables – to out-compete carbon-intensive fossil fuels. So nuclear power needs no additional subsidies in the climate bill. Besides, nuclear power has already enjoyed the lion's share of public support for the past 50 years, while efficiency and renewables have received the crumbs. Nuclear power's public support for the past half century has [topped many hundreds of billions of dollars](#), more than enough. In addition, Sen. Kerry's words about "proper controls, oversight, accountability" on new nuclear power makes no sense, when he called for further streamlining of reactor licensing – something [the American environmental movement rejects outright](#).

What You Can Do: [Dangling nuclear expansion at taxpayer expense as bait to attract Republicans to the climate bill](#) is Faustian Fission -- very risky, not only to the US Treasury, but also to the American people's health, safety and environment given the radiological risks of the entire uranium fuel chain, including reactors. Contact your two U.S. Senators via the Capitol Switchboard (202-224-3121), or [write them](#) (via "Find Your Senators"). Urge them to reject nuclear expansion, at taxpayers' financial and radiological risk, as a false solution to the climate crisis that would starve vast amounts of needed funding and support for the real answers: energy efficiency and renewable.