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Media Statement by Kevin Kamps of Beyond Nuclear regarding the Kerry-Lieberman "Climate" Bill

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"While the looming threat of catastrophic climate destabilization represents the most pressing, chronic long term crisis facing humanity as a whole, the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation and their accidental or intentional use represents the most acute, immediate risk facing the entire world. Given the Kerry-Lieberman so-called climate bill's support for nuclear weapons proliferation prone atomic energy, it is fatally flawed from the get go, and Beyond Nuclear vociferously opposes it.

This is more of a pre-emptive bailout bill for already filthy rich dirty energy industries, such as the nuclear power industry, than it is a climate protection bill. The climate protecting provisions are actually woefully inadequate, while the bill would subsidize, at taxpayer financial risk and perhaps even direct expense, at least a dozen or more atomic reactors. The bill's inclusion of the ironically named 'Clean Energy Technology Fund' would potentially add many more dirty, dangerous, and expensive reactors, subsidized and guaranteed at taxpayer financial risk. It would do so by granting the Energy Department blank check writing authority, with no limits on nuclear power loan guarantees, while also forfeiting congressional appropriations oversight.

Apparently, Senators Kerry and Lieberman feel the need to return the favor to the nuclear power industry for all the campaign contributions it has showered on the federal government. Their nuclear industry wish list giveaways represent a deep bow to the power of corporate lobbying at its worst, not to mention green-washing advertizing campaigns that happen to be misleading. The nuclear power industry has spent \$645 million in federal lobbying, nearly another \$65 million in federal campaign contributions, and undoubtedly millions more in deceptive PR and media campaigns, just in the last decade alone. But considering the potential of tens to hundreds of billions of dollars that the nuclear industry could reap from

taxpayers if this bill is enacted, it has 'purchased' a U.S. Senate subsidy bill that would extract from the U.S. Treasury quite a large return on its 'investment.' The nuclear industry is shamefully attempting to make this the best democracy money can buy, and Senators Kerry and Lieberman are playing right along.

The fact that the bill continues to support so-called "clean coal" and offshore oil drilling, despite the recent deadly coal mine disaster in West Virginia and the still unfolding oil catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico, shows just how much dirty, dangerous and expensive energy industries control this so-called "climate" bill.

The risks of a nuclear power relapse paid for by taxpayers are both financial and radiological. Meltdowns, both figurative and literal, could result. The fallout from such meltdowns would send unprecedented shockwaves through the economy, and could result in large-scale releases of deadly radioactivity downwind and downstream over vast regions. Toxic assets will also result, both financially and in the form of high-level radioactive waste which will remain a deadly hazard for a million years.

Senators Kerry and Lieberman should know better than attempting to expand nuclear power at taxpayer risk and expense. Their very own states are already suffering from hazardous radioactivity leaks from an atomic reactor. A scandalous leak of carcinogenic tritium and other hazardous radioactive isotopes has continued unabated at the Vermont Yankee reactor, just upstream from Massachusetts on the Connecticut River, for most of this year.

It's also very ironic for Senators Kerry and Lieberman to be promoting plutonium extraction from commercial high-level radioactive waste. As chairmen of the Foreign Relations and Homeland Security Committees, Senators Kerry and Lieberman, respectively, should understand that separating plutonium seriously risks the international proliferation of nuclear weapons, including into the hands of terrorists.

Finally, it is shameful that Senators Kerry and Lieberman originally planned to unveil this taxpayer-financed and funded nuclear power relapse bill on April 26, the 24th anniversary of the Chernobyl catastrophe. Chernobyl's radioactive contamination has already killed nearly a million people, according to recently published scientific studies. The only reason the bill launch was delayed till today is because Republican Senator Graham from South Carolina walked away from it a couple weeks ago.

We will fight this bill at every turn, to prevent future Chernobyl-like catastrophes from happening in this country."

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Beyond Nuclear aims to educate and activate the public about the connections between nuclear power and nuclear weapons and the need to abandon both to safeguard our future. Beyond Nuclear advocates for an energy future that is sustainable, benign and democratic.