

Obama pushes nuclear energy to boost climate bill

January 31 2010, By DINA CAPPIELLO and MATTHEW DALY ,
Associated Press Writers



President Barack Obama, left, shares a laugh with Vice President Joe Biden, right, during the Duke Georgetown NCAA college basketball game Saturday, Jan. 30, 2010, in Washington. (AP Photo/Nick Wass)

(AP) -- President Barack Obama is endorsing nuclear energy like never before, trying to win over Republicans and moderate Democrats on climate and energy legislation.

Obama singled out nuclear power in his State of the Union address, and his spending plan for the next budget year is expected to include billions more dollars in federal guarantees for new nuclear reactors. This emphasis reflects both the political difficulties of passing a climate bill in an election year and a shift from his once cautious embrace of nuclear energy.

He's now calling for a new generation of nuclear power plants.

During the campaign, Obama said he would support nuclear power with caveats. He was concerned about how to deal with radioactive waste and how much [federal money](#) was needed to support construction costs. Those concerns remain.

His administration has pledged to close Yucca Mountain, the planned multibillion-dollar burial ground in the Nevada desert for high-level radioactive waste. [Energy Secretary](#) Steven Chu has been criticized for his slow rollout of \$18.5 billion in loan guarantees to spur investment in new nuclear power plants, and the administration killed a Bush-era proposal to reprocess nuclear fuel.

What has changed is the outlook for climate and energy legislation, a White House priority. The House passed a bill in June that would limit emissions of heat-trapping gases for the first time. But the legislation led to a Republican revolt in the Senate.

Obama reaffirmed his commitment to a bill in his State of the Union speech as a way to create more clean-energy jobs, but added that "means building a new generation of safe, clean [nuclear power](#) plants in this country."

The 104 nuclear reactors in operation in 31 states provide only 20 percent of the nation's electricity. But they are responsible for 70 percent of the power from non-greenhouse gas producing sources, including wind, solar and [hydroelectric dams](#).

More information: Department of Energy: <http://www.doe.gov>

Nuclear Regulatory Commission: <http://www.nrc.gov>

Nuclear Energy Institute: <http://www.nei.org>

©2010 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: Obama pushes nuclear energy to boost climate bill (2010, January 31) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-01-obama-nuclear-energy-boost-climate.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.