



# The case against nuclear power

INTRODUCTION

A PUBLICATION OF BEYOND NUCLEAR

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# Why this Handbook?

As any activist engaged in anti-nuclear advocacy knows, nuclear energy is a complex topic. It can be technical and arcane and tends to lack the “human face.” It will occasionally make headline news — if there is a disaster or a financial failure — but the day-to-day dangers don’t attract much media.

Consequently, there is a good deal left to explain about the dangers and detriments of nuclear power. Proponents of nuclear energy have taken full advantage of this void in public awareness, downplaying and minimizing the risks and using facile and superficially appealing sound bites, unsupported by facts. For the anti-nuclear side, responding to these myths can quickly bog us down in complicated jargon and long-winded explanations.

To address this challenge, and in an endeavor to make the job of the anti-nuclear advocate less daunting, we have created this handbook.

We felt it was important to present simplified, boiled down explanations and responses to the various pieces of this very complex nuclear puzzle. Even for some of the most seasoned activists, there are elements that are less familiar, or explanations that do not come readily to hand. Our goal is to endeavor to help everyone — whether a long time campaigner or an ingenue — feel confident about their ability to articulate the facts, and to do so in compelling and non-technical language.

Consequently, we have endeavored to present these facts as simple, concise and above all accurate summaries. We have boiled down the careful, in-depth reports that

many do not have the time to read, into digestible paragraphs. We have presented the facts alphabetically by topic, as an easy reference guide. In essence, we aim to provide a definitive anti-nuclear encyclopedia, but in bite sizes

Our handbook is presented both in an on-line format and a hard copy print edition. The on-line version can be downloaded in full, or by topic, allowing activists to fashion their own fact sheets or fliers.

Everything in the handbook is documented through references and footnotes for those who wish to read further, and in order to provide data to those who may challenge our statements.

In assembling such a wealth of information, omissions will be inevitable. The status of nuclear power is also constantly changing. As can be seen in these pages, costs estimates, for one, continue to balloon. New nuclear reactors occasionally open, but far more are closing. Some of these facts and figures, therefore, may go out of date as soon as we go to press. We encourage you to find the updates on line and pencil these into the margins.

Given the scope of the topic, we have somewhat reluctantly confined the content of this edition to a U.S. focus. However, we have tried to keep as much of the generic information applicable to other countries as well. After all, there are many general truths: nuclear power plants are incredibly expensive to build and decommission; there is still no solution for the highly radioactive waste they produce; and all of them are potential deadly disasters waiting to happen.

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