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Bipartisan Commission Energy Strategy Backs Expansion of Nuclear Power

A bipartisan group of experts issued a strategy today to address long-term U.S. energy challenges, recommending expansion of nuclear power as one way to meet rising energy demand.

The privately funded National Commission on Energy Policy has spent the past two years developing policy recommendations on oil security, climate change and natural gas supply, in addition to the future of nuclear energy and other issues.

The commission issued its findings in the report, "Ending the Energy Stalemate: A Bipartisan Strategy to Meet America's Energy Challenges."

"Political and regional polarization has produced an energy stalemate, preventing America from adopting sensible approaches to some of our biggest energy problems," said John Rowe, commission co-chair and chairman and chief executive officer of Exelon Corp. "We believe that this package of recommendations can be of value to Congress and the Administration in energy legislation next year and beyond."

The report is expected to be significant in view of the broad range of views represented by the commission, which included representatives from industry, government, labor, academia, and environmental and consumer groups.

The commission recommends that to ensure nuclear power's role in meeting future energy needs, the federal government must:

- fulfill existing commitments on nuclear waste management
- provide \$2 billion over the next 10 years for research, development, demonstration and deployment of one to two advanced nuclear reactors
- significantly strengthen the international nonproliferation regime.

However, expansion of nuclear energy requires addressing concerns about cost, safety, waste management and proliferation risks, said John Holdren, committee co-chair and professor of environmental policy at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

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"Given the risks of climate change that face all of the low-carbon and no carbon supply options, it would be imprudent in the extreme not to try to keep the nuclear option open," Holdren said.

The commission also recommended mandatory limits on greenhouse gas emissions. The limits would include tradable credits and would link subsequent action to the efforts of countries, especially China, India and Brazil.

"The commission believes the United States must take responsibility for addressing its contribution to the risks of climate change," said Rowe. "But we must do so in a manner that recognizes the global nature of the challenge and does not harm the competitive position of U.S. businesses internationally. Our plan meets those goals."

In addition, the commission recommended that the United States pursue the use of more natural gas, including the construction of an Alaskan gas pipeline; advanced coal technologies, such as coal gasification; and additional use of renewables.

The report recommends that the federal government extend production tax credits to include advanced nuclear and new hydropower as well as solar, geothermal and wind.

The full report and summary of recommendations is available on the commission's website at <http://www.energycommission.org/>.

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