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LD 343

These comments are related to LD 343, 342 and 601.

First, I will state that I am jaded as it relates to nuclear power, as I spent much of my adult life living in Plymouth, MA where the former Pilgrim Nuclear plant was located. Today that plant is undergoing a longer than expected decommissioning process that is entangled in controversy, including how to dispose of radioactive water. Spent nuclear fuel rods that were promised by the federal government to be moved to a permanent storage facility, still remain there, with no permanent storage solution on the horizon.

During the recent public hearing for these bills a project called Moltex Energy was mentioned. In reading more about Moltex, I learned that it may offer the ability to reuse spent nuclear fuel and lower the volume of the existing spent nuclear fuel stockpile that needs to be permanently stored. A comment was made that perhaps locating an SMR at the former Maine Yankee site in Wiscasset might be an appropriate location for an SMR. I agree with this idea, provided that the SMR is capable of safely reusing and reducing the volume of spent nuclear fuel, such as the Moltex technology purports to be able to do. My agreement comes with some caveats.

1) That the issues of corrosion identified with the Moltex technology is satisfactorily resolved, 2) that the facility be limited to using the spent nuclear fuel that is already stored on the Maine Yankee site and not bring in spent nuclear fuel from other locations, 3) that the host community, and any other communities within any identified evacuation zone, vote to agree to the placement of an SMR at the Maine Yankee site and 4) that a satisfactory decommissioning plan be established, and fully funded, prior to construction.

Finally, to be clear, I am not in favor of the widespread use of SMR's in Maine, at this time.