



# **SNAKE RIVER ALLIANCE**

**IDAHO'S NUCLEAR WATCHDOG**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, February 8, 2007

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Jeremy Maxand, Executive Director  
Snake River Alliance  
(208) 344-9161 office  
(208) 850-9334 cell

Michele Boyd, Legislative Director  
Public Citizen  
(202) 454-5134 office

## **COMPANY TO LEASE LAND ALONG SNAKE RIVER TO BUILD NUCLEAR POWER PLANT IN HOPES OF CASHING IN ON FEDERAL SUBSIDIES; REALITY IS THAT LOCALS WILL BE FORKING OVER**

Alternate Energy Holdings Incorporation (AEHI) announced today it has signed a lease agreement with an Idaho farmer to purchase 4,000 acres along the Snake River to build a 1,500 Megawatt nuclear reactor. The company claims the energy will be used to pump irrigation water, for Idaho's energy grid, and to sell on the open energy market. Watchdogs maintain the proposal is completely unnecessary to meet Idaho's energy needs and could put local communities on the hook for millions.

"This land grab in Idaho by AEHI is obviously an effort to get in on federal taxpayer handouts," said Michele Boyd, legislative director of Public Citizen's Energy Program. "But the reality is that there are already numerous companies in the Southeast lined up with their hands out. In fact, the billions in federal subsidies are not enough to make nuclear power cost-competitive, so those companies have snookered local communities into ponying up hundreds of millions more. I doubt that is what Idahoans have in mind."

The 2005 Energy Policy Act provides more than \$12 billion in cradle-to-grave subsidies for new nuclear power plants. With respect to the act, AEHI said it has "...created an ideal market atmosphere for the development of new plants. AEHI will be at the forefront of this opportunity by building an additional unit at its operating plant or constructing a new plant."

But the credit rating agency Standard and Poor's concluded in a January 2006 report that the subsidies in the Energy Policy Act "may not be enough to mitigate the risks associated with operating issues and high capital costs" and that the subsidies in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 may not be sufficient to keep the credit rating of a utility that commits to building a new reactor from being downgraded. In response, companies have been asking state and local communities for more handouts. For example, Calvert County in Maryland has promised Constellation \$300 million in tax breaks if the company builds a new plant there. Southern Company applied to the Georgia Public Utility Commission for permission to pass off \$51 million for its license applications to ratepayers, whether or not they actually build a new reactor.

"Idahoans should be very wary of any company that seeks to purchase thousands of acres of land to build a nuclear reactor before a full open discussion with the public and elected officials," said Jeremy Maxand, executive director of the Snake River Alliance. "Any community where a project like this is proposed deserves full disclosure up front on issues like water use and waste management."

Very little information about the Bruneau reactor proposal has been made available to the residents in the Bruneau area or to elected officials since AEHI first announced its intention to build a nuclear reactor in Idaho in December 2006.

"I've talked to people in the Bruneau area, and the people on the street and in the general stores aren't excited about this proposal," said Ester Ceja, outreach director for the Snake River Alliance. "People would rather have windmills and geothermal plants, not nuclear reactors and nuclear waste, in their backyards."

For a complete list of 2005 Energy Policy Act nuclear subsidies go to:  
<http://www.citizen.org/documents/NuclearEnergyBillFinal.pdf>

For AEHI's recent lease announcement go to:  
[http://www.marketwire.com/mw/release\\_html\\_b1?release\\_id=212941](http://www.marketwire.com/mw/release_html_b1?release_id=212941)

*The Snake River Alliance is an Idaho-based grassroots group working through research, education, and community advocacy for peace and justice, the end to nuclear weapons, responsible solutions to nuclear waste and contamination, and sustainable alternatives to nuclear power.*