

Nuclear Power Means Clean Air

(NAPSA)—A growing number of people, particularly environmentalists, are taking a second look at nuclear power as a clean, sustainable and safe source of electricity that can significantly reduce global warming, pollution and energy dependence—and meet our ever-increasing demand for energy.

One woman, a staunch environmentalist and skeptic about nuclear power, made it her mission to find out the truth about this energy source. Gwyneth Cravens spent nearly a decade immersing herself in the subject.

“When I began my research, I had assumed we had many choices in the way we made electricity, but we don’t,” says Cravens, author of “Power to Save the World: The Truth About Nuclear Energy.” “Wind and solar have a role to play, but nuclear is the only large-scale, non-greenhouse-gas-emitting source of electricity that can be considerably expanded while maintaining only a small environmental footprint. About 20 percent of our electricity comes from nuclear power, but about 75 percent comes from plants burning fossil fuels, mostly coal and natural gas. In contrast, nuclear plants do not burn anything nor do they emit harmful, heat-trapping gases into our atmosphere and pollutants that kill 24,000 Americans annually.”

Despite these facts, a 2007 survey found that fewer than half of Americans strongly associate nuclear power with clean air. Many misperceptions and fears persist. Here are a few of the most common myths and facts:

Myth: The “smoke” coming from nuclear plants is harmful to health and the environment.

Fact: The “smoke” that people



Nuclear power is seen by many as a safe, clean-air solution to America’s growing energy needs.

see coming out of nuclear power plant cooling towers is water vapor like you see when you breathe out on a cold day.

Myth: Living near a nuclear plant is dangerous due to radiation contamination.

Fact: A little-known fact is that natural background radiation from rocks, soil and water is around us all the time. In fact, a person living within 50 miles of a nuclear plant receives less radiation from it in a year than from eating one banana. In addition, surveys have shown there is no increase in radiological-induced cancer in people living near nuclear facilities.

Myth: Nuclear energy is not safe.

Fact: All U.S. nuclear plants—for example, Indian Point Energy Center in Buchanan, N.Y.—are regulated by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and are designed with numerous safety systems, each with multiple, redundant components—first to prevent accidents and second to minimize accidents should they occur. In the 40-year history of the industry, there has never been a death or injury to any member of the public due to an accident at a U.S. nuclear power plant.