

## Senator Pushes for Nuclear Power

U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander will call on the federal government to allow construction of 100 nuclear power plants over the next 20 years in what will be a preview of the Republican game plan for developing a national energy policy. Congress has been working for weeks on climate change legislation, but Senate Republicans argue that congressional Democrats and President Barack Obama are putting too much emphasis on renewable energy, such as wind and solar, and giving short shrift to nuclear power.

"We're getting too much lip service and not enough action from the Obama administration on nuclear power, and the impression is being left that we can run this big, complex country on electricity from the wind, the sun and the earth. That may be true one day, but it probably will be 30, 40 or even 50 years down the road. Right now, nuclear power and conservation is the only course we have to provide energy independence, good jobs and clean energy. Climate change may be the inconvenient problem, but nuclear power is the inconvenient answer", said Alexander, who as chairman of the Senate Republican Conference is responsible for developing the party's message on issues.

To keep nuclear power part of the national energy debate, Senate Republicans also will develop a blueprint over the next several months that will offer more details about building new nuclear plants, such as potential obstacles and ways around them. And next month, the Senate Republican Conference will begin a series of hearings on specific issues, such as loan financing to assist with new nuclear power plants, how to safely recycle used nuclear fuel and how to make sure there are enough skilled laborers to build new plants.

The initial hearings will be in Washington, but others may be held across the country, Alexander said. Building 100 nuclear plants in 20 years may seem ambitious, Alexander said, but not when you consider that two dozen applications already are pending before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. "Those should be hopefully on board by 2016 to 2018. "Then, after that, hopefully the country could build five to seven plants a year." However, "it will take presidential leadership to make sure it gets done," Alexander conceded.

"If we're serious about clean air, if we're serious about climate change, if we're serious about having enough low-cost, reliable electricity to keep our jobs from going overseas, we don't have any other option," Alexander said.