Hoadley Fights for Citizen Oversight of Nuclear Decommissioning

LANSING — Rep. Jon Hoadley (D-Kalamazoo) introduced House Bill 5377 recently to create a Citizens’ Advisory Panel to protect the health and safety of local communities surrounding Michigan nuclear power plants slated for decommissioning. Under the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, the panel would be responsible for advising the governor, Legislature, state agencies, and the general public to minimize risks posed by the decommissioning process.

“This bill helps answer the question of ‘what happens next’ when the decision is made to turn off a nuclear power plant.” said Hoadley. “When we bring people and community to the table to make decisions, we can ensure the safety, prosperity, and well-being of Michigan residents is always the highest priority.”

The panel would be composed of a wide range of members, including representatives from state agencies, the Legislature, and local tribal councils, and as well as citizens representing the interests of local governments, businesses, environmental protection and regional water quality, emergency planning agencies, agriculture, radiology, and science education within the immediate area surrounding the plant undergoing decommissioning.

“We commend Rep. Hoadley for working to create a community led panel with expert support to guide the decommissioning of nuclear power plants in Michigan,” said Michigan League of Conservation Voters Government Affairs Director Nick Occhipinti. “This legislation will ensure proper waste disposal, site
restoration, economic impact, and the transparent management of
decommissioning funds as old, uneconomic nuclear plants are brought offline.”

“These facilities provide more than just energy, they employ many people
and make significant contributions to the regional economy and especially to the
tax base,” said Utility Workers Union of America National Executive Vice
President Patrick Dillon. “Rep. Hoadley’s important legislation takes meaningful
steps to mitigate the economic and environmental impacts as area nuclear plants
are taken offline. This measure is a commonsense approach we look forward to
working together to advance.”

Members of the International Brotherhood of Electric Workers and United
Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of Plumbing and Pipe Fitting
Industry who are present or former employees of a nuclear power plant in
Michigan would also be included on the panel.

“This is a smart decision to include members of the surrounding impacted
communities as well as an excellent opportunity for them to have a voice as the
process moves forward,” said Jeremy Garza of the Michigan Pipe Trades
Association. “Many of the men and women in the United Association of Plumbers
and Pipefitters from across the State of Michigan have played a part in building
and maintaining these Nuclear Generating Stations.”

In addition to its advisory role, the panel would be responsible for serving
as a conduit for public information and education, while encouraging community
involvement in the decommissioning process.

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