



# THE HIGH KNOB HERALD

## NUCLEAR AWARENESS EDITION

The Clinch Coalition Newsletter

### TOWN HALL

Do you know about the government's plan to put nuclear reactors in Southwest Virginia? Seven potential locations have been identified, most near neighborhoods, schools and businesses.

You have an opportunity to learn about what are being called

Small Modular Reactors (SMRs).

You have an opportunity to ask questions or voice your concerns.

You have an opportunity to have your voice be heard.

**October 25th, 6:00 pm**  
**Norton Community Center**  
**201 Park Avenue NE**

Sponsored by: Alliance for Appalachia, Appalachian Peace Education Center, Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards, The Clinch Coalition, Virginia Organizing – Wise County Chapter. Go to [clinchcoalition.org/smrs](http://clinchcoalition.org/smrs) for more information.

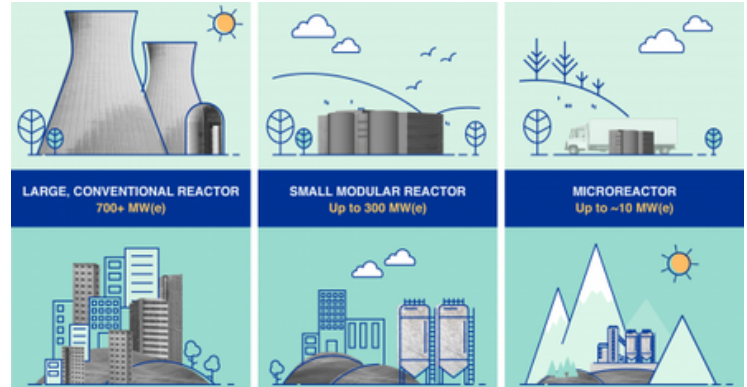
## Small modular nuclear reactors: Unlikely, unaffordable, dirty and dangerous

The Appalachia Peace Education Center in Abingdon considers the small reactors a bad idea. Here's why.

By Rees Shearer

A year ago, Gov. Glenn Youngkin came to Bristol to announce proposals from his new [Virginia Energy Plan](#). He declared, "A growing Virginia must have reliable, affordable and clean energy for Virginia's families and businesses."

As a requisite to achieving those goals, the Governor proposed four small modular nuclear reactors for the Southwest Virginia Coalfields. But SM[n]Rs fail to meet the governor's three laudable goals.



SM[n]Rs cannot be reliably licensed and constructed for a decade or more. No commercial SM[n]R has been successfully licensed. There are competing designs and even the Governor said the project would take 10 years. Nuclear power has a notorious history of construction and licensing delays. That means no new nuclear energy generation for at least a decade. There can be no reliable generation when the plant is not up and running. Solar energy and energy storage on restored mine lands can be brought online in a fraction of that time.

SM[n]Rs are unaffordable. At utility scale, the electricity energy standard, [Lazards Levelized Cost of Energy](#), rates nuclear as the most expensive means to generate electric power. It's not clear whether nuclear waste management, insurance, and decommissioning are included among the costs. The Nu-Scale reactor, under construction in Idaho, is the only SM[n]R even close to licensing.

Between 2016 and 2023, [NuScale's estimated power cost increased 60%](#). That's in addition to \$4 billion in subsidies from U.S. taxpayers.

(Full Article Cont. on page 2)

Read the full article as published on Cardinal News here:



**Cont...**

The latest nuclear project to come online (seven years late), Georgia Power's Vogtle Units 3 and 4, exceeded cost projections by 120%. It's unclear how much of the cost overruns customers will be forced to shell out. Nuclear power construction history shows an unfailing correlation between new designs and cost increases and project delays. Youngkin is opting for new technology designs. SM[n]Rs will not be affordable and Apco and Dominion Energy try to make sure customers bear the costs, even if the SM[n]R project is canceled before generating one Watt. The LCOE shows solar and on-shore wind, even adding battery storage, are the lowest cost sources of new power generation.

*SM[n]Rs are dirty and dangerous.* SM[n]Rs produce plutonium 239, the most lethal element in high-level nuclear waste. A Stanford University study concluded that "small modular reactors may produce a disproportionately larger amount of nuclear waste than bigger nuclear plants." That element is deadly for a quarter million years, a horrifying legacy. There is no permanent storage solution. Just to maintain this waste is already costing taxpayers and utility customers tens of billions of dollars. Additionally, plutonium 239 is the key element in proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear terrorism.

There is risk of radiation leaks or a catastrophic accident. This becomes all the more concerning, given the proximity of sites already evaluated as potential SM[n]R locations to Southwest Virginia schools, neighborhoods, and downtowns. The governor proposes reprocessing the waste, which adds transportation and terrorism risks.

But what about jobs, you may ask? Modular design means that the reactors would be manufactured in one central location. Modules would be transported by truck to reactor sites. Then a specialized crew, moving from site to site, would assemble the reactor. At most, ground preparation will be the work for local contractors. What about high skill nuclear technology jobs the Governor is touting? A spokesperson at NuScale Power, eagerly anticipated, "NuScale

developed the information needed to obtain NRC approval that allows up to 12 NuScale Power Modules to be operated remotely from a single control room." So local jobs may only amount to security, cutting the grass, and periodic reactor maintenance with possible radiation exposure.

The Clinch Coalition is a leading regional voice for transparency and opposition to SM[n]Rs. The Coalition developed satellite videos (available at their website), demonstrating the risky proximity of homes, a school and businesses of three of seven SM[n]R sites proposed in a study by LENOWISCO Planning District Commission. Gov. Youngkin could have proposed solar farms on restored mine lands. When combined with current technology battery storage, solar generates reliable, affordable and clean power — 24/7, installed and maintained by a local workforce — today. Just what the governor said he wanted.

*Rees Shearer is a 40-year member of the Appalachian Peace Education Center in Abingdon. He writes this on the center's behalf in response to the Sept. 9 opinion piece: "Virginia's clean energy revolution begins in Southwest."*

**These five local environmental justice nonprofit organizations have come together to raise awareness of the Governor's plan to bring nuclear reactors to Southwest Virginia.**





# Upcoming Local Events

**November 12th, 2023 @12:30pm**

**Pride of Rural Virginia: Dickenson County**

**Jetty Baker Center**

**Clintwood, VA**

Register with the QR Code below:



**LGBTQ+**

**Members, Allies, & Healthcare Providers:**

**Join us**

for an interactive discussion on healthcare experiences, concerns, and resources in your community.

- Info Tables & Resources from 20+ Organizations
- Q&A Panel with Regional Health Professionals
- Free On-site Rapid Testing (HCV/HIV/Syphilis)
- Free Narcan & REVIVE Training
- Free Vision & Hearing Screening
- Grocery & Hygiene Distro

Register Now: [vrha.org/pride](http://vrha.org/pride)

**FREE BBQ & MAC!**

**Pig-N-Out**



Virginia Rural Health Association  
**Pride of Rural Virginia: Dickenson County Community Health Chat**  
 Sun November 12, 2023  
 12:30 - 4:00 pm  
 Jettie Baker Center  
 Clintwood, VA

Now is the time to become a new member or renew your membership. Also, consider making a tax-deductible donation. Your support is vital to helping us continue our advocacy for a clean and protected environment. In 2023, The Clinch Coalition enters its 25th year dedicated to working on environmental justice for our communities and protecting our forests, waters, and the vast biodiversity of Southwest Virginia. Only together can we conserve our natural heritage, create excellent recreational opportunities, and build a culture of land stewardship.

### Contact Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: (To receive The Clinch Coalition's Monthly Newsletter) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

### Renew Membership or Become a New Member

\_\_\_ Student \$10 \_\_\_ Individual \$25 \_\_\_ Family \$40 \_\_\_ Business \$50

Make check to: The Clinch Coalition, P.O. Box 2732, Wise, VA 24293

### Make a Tax-Deductible Donation

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Make check to Virginia Organizing and write on memo line: The Clinch Coalition

Mail check to: The Clinch Coalition, P.O. Box 2732, Wise, Virginia 24293, or go to [clinchcoalition.org](http://clinchcoalition.org) and click on Donate.

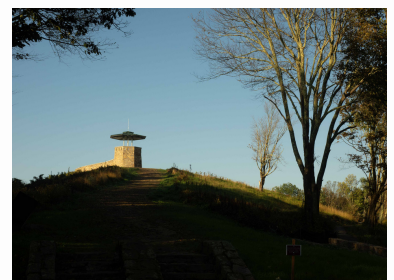
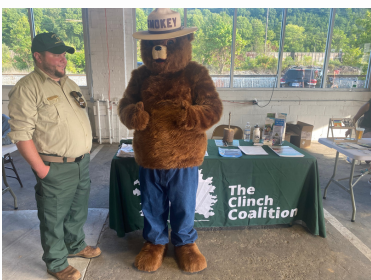
**Paypal/Credit Card:** Go to [clinchcoalition.org](http://clinchcoalition.org) and click on Donate to be linked to TCC's PayPal.

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**Please consider making a donation to support TCC's efforts in Environmental Justice! To do so, please visit [www.clinchcoalition.org](http://www.clinchcoalition.org).**