

An editorial in the Grand junction daily sentinel

Nuclear goes Green (River)

By The Daily Sentinel

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Along with fabulous melons and fantastic whitewater rafting, Green River, Utah, might one day be famous for something else: a nuclear power plant.

It's way too soon to get breathless in anticipation or anxiety. As The Daily Sentinel's Gary Harmon reported Sunday, the organization contemplating a nuclear plant at Green River hasn't even chosen a site yet. Permitting could take five years or more, and construction would require another five years.

But Transition Power LLC has filed an application with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission for a plant near Green River. And recently, officials with Emery County signed an agreement with the state of Utah that will allow the county to lease state-owned lands for industrial uses. That means the county and Transition Power can begin negotiations for potential sites for a power plant.

None of that guarantees a nuclear plant will be built near Green River. After all, no permits for entirely new nuclear power plants have been approved in the United States since the Three Mile Island accident in 1979.

But last year the Nuclear Regulatory Commission did give preliminary approval to the expansion of an Illinois nuclear plant. And more than a dozen applications for new nuclear plants are said to be in the works.

One reason is that even many ardent environmental groups are beginning to lose their antipathy toward nuclear power. They recognize that nuclear power produces almost no emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

Furthermore, if we are going to block construction of new coal plants — as has been occurring around the country, most recently in eastern Utah last month — while demanding more power for things like electric cars, the power will have to come from some source. Solar and wind power are a long way from being able to meet our electric needs.

Green River is situated well for such an endeavor. It is near some of the largest uranium deposits in the world and far removed from large population centers. It is more than 100 miles from Grand Junction.

This project is a long way from being a *fait accompli*. But, as we look for ways to meet our growing demand for electricity, it deserves thorough consideration, even if it is not far from Mesa County's backyard.