Counterplan links to politics

Regional greenhouse gas initiative links to their nuclear energy, green energy arguments, also gives loan guarantees and tax credits, links to any of their finance arguments.

All of the governors coming out in support would probably be linked back to Obama anyway – they read a card in the 2nc that it’s unpopular because it’s linked to the economy. When voters see they

Moratorium on nuclear licensing now – plan is a precondition to solvency.

Reuters 9/6/12, “NRC staff to review nuclear reactor waste storage rules,” <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/06/us-utilities-nrc-waste-idUSBRE88515T20120906>

All of the incentives bad, removing licenses good arguments are offense against the counterplan.

#### No one switches votes over energy.

Washington Post 6-27

The Washington Post, 6/27/2012 Energy ads flood TV in swing states, http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/energy-ads/2012/06/27/gJQAD5MR7V\_story.html)

Energy issues don’t spark much excitement among voters, ranking below health care, education and the federal budget deficit — not to mention jobs and the economy. And yet those same voters are being flooded this year with campaign ads on energy policy. Particularly in presidential swing states, the airwaves are laden with messages boosting oil drilling and natural gas and hammering President Obama for his support of green energy. The Cleveland area alone has heard $2.7 million in energy-related ads. The disconnect between what voters say they care about and what they’re seeing on TV lies in the money behind the ads, much of it coming from oil and gas interests. Those funders get the double benefit of attacking Obama at the same time they are promoting their industry. Democrats also have spent millions on the subject, defending the president’s record and tying Republican candidate Mitt Romney to “Big Oil.” Overall, more than $41 million, about one in four of the dollars spent on broadcast advertising in the presidential campaign, has gone to ads mentioning energy, more than a host of other subjects and just as much as health care, according to ad-tracking firm Kantar Media/Cmag. In an election focused heavily on jobs and the economy, all of this attention to energy seems a bit off topic. But the stakes are high for energy producers and environmentalists, who are squared off over how much the government should regulate the industry. And attention has been heightened by a recent boom in production using new technologies such as fracking and horizontal drilling, as well as a spike in gas prices this spring just as the general election got underway. When asked whether energy is important, more than half of voters say yes, according to recent polls. But asked to rank their top issues, fewer than 1 percent mention energy.

#### Obama supporting SMR now – 500 million

McNelis 11 (David N. McNelis is director of the Center for Sustainable Energy, Environment and Economic Development in the Institute for the Environment at UNC-Chapel Hill.)

(6/24/11 “Safer power from smaller reactors “ http://www.newsobserver.com/2011/06/24/1295895/safer-power-from-smaller-reactors.html)

President Barack Obama has allocated $500 million to be spent on research and development of SMRs over the next five years. Energy Secretary Steven Chu says he expects an SMR to be operating in this country by the end of this decade. In Congress, Republicans and Democrats alike support SMR development.

#### Licensing is the biggest hurdle for small modular reactors or SMRs Now

Wheeler 11 (Brian Wheeler - Associate Editor of Power Engineering)

(February 11, “Small Modular Reactors Are "Hot"” proquest. Power Engineering. Volume 115. No. 2)

The distant timeframe is for numerous reasons. The plan is to build a SMR, start generating power and bring more online to form a larger nuclear plant, as needed. The SMRs are expected to be ready, as the DOE calls it, to "plug and play" when the reactor arrives on-site. Sounds simple? There are still obstacles that need to be defeated before the arrival of a commercial SMR. Licensing is the number one challenge at this point. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission established the Advanced Reactor Program in 2009 to focus on new licensing technologies. NRC is studying several pre-application reviews to identify possible technical issues, such as safety, security and emergency planning. The light water small reactors may be very similar to large designs, but they still must go through a separate licensing process. Vendors that engage the NRC early can resolve these technical issues. To address safety and security concerns, the small reactors will be built with post-9/11 safety concepts into the designs. NRC expects the first application submission by 2012. The funds for the research and development of the SMR could pose a problem as well. But the Obama administration has requested $38.9 million for the 2011 fiscal year budget for the development of SMRs. The DOE supports public and private partnerships to advance mature SMR designs and supports "research and development activities to advance the understanding and demonstration of innovative reactor technologies and concepts." Among other goals, in FY2011 the DOE plans to “solicit, select and award project(s) with industry partners for cost-sharing the U.S. NRC review of design certification document for up to two of the most promising light water SMR concept(s) for near-term licensing and deployment” and “develop recommendations, in collaboration with NRC and industry, for changes in NRC policy, regulations or guidance to license and enable SMRs for deployment in the U.S. And as the general public’s interest in energy continues to grow, so does the interest in SMRs, said Philip Moor, vice president of consulting and management firm High Bridge Associates. If approved, the funding towards the development of small reactors in the U.S. may play a part of the International Atomic Energy Agency’s estimate of between 49 to 97 SMRs built by 2030. Utilities may have more interest in SMRs once the NRC gains more expertise and the uncertainty of deploying these reactors in the U.S. can be addressed. And if the regulator approves any of the designs for licensing, the U.S. may see a stronger nuclear renaissance take place. As we have seen, some operators have scaled back or completely pulled out on plans to build new large reactors due to the cost. The ability to construct these reactors in factories could lead to lower costs and shorter construction times. Of course, the upfront capital to develop and engineer the facility is going to be needed. But after that, the reactors can be built in the controlled environment in repetition to lower cost, which could in return lead to more clean energy on the grid.

#### Regulatory gridlock is blocking SMRs – streamlining regulations is key to commercialization – it’s modeled globally

Jessica Lovering, Ted Nordhaus, and Michael Shellenberger are policy analyst, chairman, and president of the Breakthrough Institute, a public policy think tank and research organization, 9/7/2012 (http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/09/07/out\_of\_the\_nuclear\_closet?page=full)

Nuclear has enjoyed bipartisan support in Congress for more than 60 years, but the enthusiasm is running out. The Obama administration deserves credit for authorizing funding for two small modular reactors, which will be built at the Savannah River site in South Carolina. But a much more sweeping reform of U.S. nuclear energy policy is required. At present, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has little institutional knowledge of anything other than light-water reactors and virtually no capability to review or regulate alternative designs. This affects nuclear innovation in other countries as well, since the NRC remains, despite its many critics, the global gold standard for thorough regulation of nuclear energy. **Most other countries follow the NRC's lead when it comes to establishing new** technical and operational **standards for the design, construction, and operation of nuclear plants**.

What's needed now is a new national commitment to the development, testing, demonstration, and early stage commercialization of a broad range of new nuclear technologies -- from much smaller light-water reactors to next generation ones -- in search of a few designs that can be mass produced and deployed at a significantly lower cost than current designs. This will require both greater public support for nuclear innovation and an entirely different regulatory framework to review and approve new commercial designs.

In the meantime, developing countries will continue to build traditional, large nuclear power plants. But time is of the essence. With the lion's share of future carbon emissions coming from those emerging economic powerhouses, the need to develop smaller and cheaper designs that can scale faster is all the more important.

Taking DoE certification requirements out of the equation streamlines reactor certification and licensing.

Spencer 11 (Jack Spencer is Research Fellow in Nuclear Energy in the Thomas A. Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies 2/15/11 “Is the President’s Small Reactor Push the Right Approach?” http://blog.heritage.org/2011/02/15/is-the-presidents-small-reactor-push-the-right-approach/)

Yet many of these companies insist that without such public support, they cannot move forward. Such conclusions are based on one or a combination of three things:

The underlying technology is economically dubious. This may well be the case, but is yet unknown. The only way to determine the economic viability of SMRs is to introduce them into the marketplace. Doing so should not, however, be a public policy decision and should instead be left up to the private sector. Companies want subsidies or preferential treatment to increase profits. This too may be accurate, but it should not be sufficient to stop private investment if the underlying economics are credible. And given the significant private investments already made absent specific federal SMR R&D programs, one can conclude that investors are confident in the economic potential of SMRs. Regulatory risk outweighs the potential financial benefit of greater investment. New nuclear designs cannot be introduced into the marketplace without a regulatory framework. The absence of such a framework makes SMR investment prohibitively risky without some way to offset that risk, which the federal R&D program would partially do. A lack of research and development or not having a specific Department of Energy (DOE) program dedicated to SMRs is not the problem. Establishing them is merely a symptom of the problem: the absence of a predictable, fair, and efficient regulatory framework to allow the introduction of SMRs into the marketplace. Establishing a Regulatory Framework The Obama budget essentially acknowledged the regulatory problem in his budget, which requests $67 million for DOE to work on licensing technical support for small light water reactors. While the intent is correct, the approach is wrong. The Administration is relying on the same bureaucratic, taxpayer-funded process that is stifling large reactor certification when it should use this opportunity to establish a new, more efficient licensing pathway. Instead of paying for DOE bureaucrats to get in the way of commercial progress, the Administration should commit to ensuring that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is fully equipped and prepared to regulate new reactor designs. This should include high-temperature gas-cooled reactors and liquid-metal-cooled fast reactors as well as small light water designs. This would provide a strong regulatory foundation for each of the expected design certification applications. The DOE should have no role in the process. If a company wants to get its reactor design certified for commercial use in the U.S., it should be able to go straight to the NRC for that service. Such an approach would substantially decrease the risk associated with getting designs certified, which in turn would alleviate the need for public support. Then, instead of seeking taxpayer funds to offset regulatory risk, reactor designers could develop investors to support the certification process.

#### Streamlining bureaucratic licensing transforms the nuclear industry – the market is strong enough to support SMRs.

Spencer 11 (Jack Spencer is Research Fellow in Nuclear Energy in the Thomas A. Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies 2/15/11 “Is the President’s Small Reactor Push the Right Approach?” http://blog.heritage.org/2011/02/15/is-the-presidents-small-reactor-push-the-right-approach/)

Establishing a Regulatory Framework

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Build the Framework and They Will Come

Nuclear energy is already clean, safe, and affordable. Introducing small reactors could make it transformational. But the federal government should not drive the process. It should be supported by the market. If the underlying technology is as strong as many of us believe it to be, the federal government needs only to provide a predictable, stable, efficient, and fair regulatory environment. The rest will happen on its own—or it won’t.

#### SMRs rejuvenate the nuclear industry by resolving financing challenges.

Davenport 12 [Coral, energy and environment correspondent – The National Journal, Cleaner Energy, Beyond the Horizon April 19, 2012 The National Journal, Lexis]

However, many of the nation's nuclear power reactors will reach retirement age in the coming decades, and there are no plans to replace them. The biggest challenge in building a nuclear-power plant is financing: It can take up to $10 billion and six years to build a plant, compared with less than half that time and cost to build a natural-gas facility. Some of that cost is for construction, and some of it is for higher rates of insurance and liability in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan. Either way, the nuclear-power industry says that Wall Street isn't interested in investing in new plants, and the result is a freeze on getting this major source of new zero-carbon power onto the electric grid for the foreseeable future. But what if a nuclear-power plant wasn't so expensive to build? Small modular reactors might solve that problem. Companies such as Northrup Grumman and Babcock & Wilcox have developed plans to mass-produce small, identical modular nuclear reactors that could be built for a fraction of the cost of existing plants. Two main factors drive the cost of a nuclear power plant: size and on-site construction. A typical nuclear power plant is massive and produces enough electricity to power a city (about 1 million homes). On-site construction of such a project requires billions of dollars, reams of paperwork, and years of regulatory hurdles. So engineers have designed nuclear plants that are one-third the size of a typical plant and can be cheaply mass-produced and delivered to various sitesmuch like the savings on prefabricated houses. Mass-producing small plants would cut down on the price and make low-carbon nuclear power available to rural communities that can't consider it otherwise. Electric utilities could customize the size of the plants, ordering multiple reactors and getting a discount for a two-pack, four-pack, or six-pack of identical reactors that would work together. Or a power company could just order premade plug-and-play reactors as its service population grows. The modular reactor designs include key improvements over older nuclear plants: They have advanced safety systems, allowing them to operate for up to three days in the case of power outage and thus offer better prevention against a Fukushima-style meltdowns; they also will be able to burn and reuse parts of the spent nuclear fuel, cutting down on nuclear waste. For now, however, these designs remain on the drawing board. To get a small modular plant plugged into the grid, a utility will first have to pay up to $500 million for the design to be approved and permitted by the Nuclear Regulatory Commissionabout a five-year process.