

**Judul** : Nuclear power has no place in renewables bills activists  
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## Nuclear power has no place in renewables bill: Activists

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Activists are urging regulators to exclude nuclear energy development from the new and renewable energy (NRE) bill, arguing it would hinder Indonesia's transition to green energy.

"We urge House of Representatives Commission VII to remove all mention of nonrenewable energy in the new and renewables category of the bill," the cofounder of renewables advocacy group Adidaya Initiative, Aji Said Iqbal Fajri, said in an open letter dated May 19, referring to the House commission that oversees energy and mineral resources.

The letter was issued by a group of activists called the Civil Society Coalition, which includes Adidaya Initiative, as well as by the Institute for Essential Services Reform (IESR) and the Indonesian Center for Environmental Law (ICEL).

"There has been no response from the government regarding the open letter by the coalition as of now," Aji said on Monday.

The activists argue that energy from coal gasification and nuclear power plants would increase greenhouse gas emissions.

The NRE bill, which is currently in the making, is a crucial part of Indonesia's efforts to achieve its target of producing 23 percent of all energy from renewable sources by 2025, as stipulated in the government's national energy road map.

IESR executive director Fabby Tumiwa suggested that the gov-

ernment focus on renewable energy development, including the mapping of renewable resources, developing domestic industry and improving the investment climate for renewable energy projects.

"Accommodating nuclear energy in the bill would hinder renewable energy development," he told *The Jakarta Post* on Monday.

"Countries with abundant renewable energy resources have started to abandon nuclear power - it should be our last resort; this should be the basis of our energy planning. Small modular reactor [SMR] technology is still too premature," Fabby continued, referring to nuclear power plant company ThorCon's claim that such technology could be cheap at US\$800 to \$1,000 per kilowatt of generation capacity.

The National Nuclear Energy Agency (Batan) has repeatedly announced plans for large-scale nuclear power plants to be built in several areas of the country, including Central Java and Bangka Belitung, but these ideas had floundered in the face of serious design flaws, environmental issues and financial impracticality, Fabby said in an article published by the *Post* on March 12.

Adidaya Initiative's Aji said the main concerns with nuclear plant development in Indonesia included investment risk given the high upfront costs as well as questions about safety and nuclear disposal.

"A nuclear power plant [is not likely] to provide economic ben-

efits. Indonesia has to learn from the scenarios of other countries before deciding on building a nuclear plant," he told the *Post* on Monday, citing the Philippines' plan to revive the 620-megawatt Bataan nuclear power plant, worth an estimated \$2.2 billion, which has been dormant since its establishment in the 1980s.

The Philippines relies on imported coal for more than half of its power generation. Supporters of nuclear power in the country say the technology offers a cleaner option to help meet demand.

"Hasty policy formulation without long-term economic, social and political analysis can lead to project failure," Aji said.

### Nuclear energy 'too risky'

Grita Anindarini, program director at ICEL, said provisions concerning nuclear energy in the NRE bill could produce enormous environmental protection costs for the state, as the bill stipulated that the construction of radioactive waste storage sites would be directly charged to the central government.

"Sites to store high-level radioactive waste are very costly," she told the *Post*, also on Monday. For example, the construction of a high-level radioactive storage site Onkalo, Finland, cost approximately \$3.4 billion, according to Grita.

"This will be a burden for the state and would continue to be a burden, because storing radioactive waste takes a very long time," she said on Monday.

Grita went on to say that operation failures would also be costly. The 2011 Fukushima nuclear accident, she noted, caused an estimated \$650 billion in losses.

Geographically, Indonesia bears a resemblance to Japan, according to Didi Wicaksono, the climate energy team leader at Greenpeace.

The Fukushima incident had left a dent in Japan's energy security, as the country needed to stop its operations. As of now, Didi estimated, only 15 percent of the contaminated 840 square kilometers had been restored.

"Going nuclear to solve the energy security issue is misguided. Nuclear plants still need uranium as fuel, and [Indonesia] doesn't have uranium reserves. This will make us dependent on other countries," he said on Monday.

### Nuclear energy law

Indonesian Renewable Energy Society (METI) executive director Paul Butarbutar said the government and nuclear plant industry would need to consider a revision of Regulation No. 10/1997 on nuclear energy if they wanted to push nuclear energy in Indonesia.

In the open letter on May 19, Paul suggested the government focus instead on establishing a solid legal basis for investment in renewables through the NRE bill.

"There is no urgency to include nuclear energy in the [NRE] bill," he said.