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 **TODAY'S "SHORT TOPIC"**
RENEWABLE ENERGY;
NUCLEAR ENERGY;
BASE LOAD ENERGY;
WHAT DOES
IT ALL MEAN?



By Stephen L. Bakke  February 8, 2016

Here's what provoked me:

There's a never-ending debate going on about the potential for non-fossil fuel energy sources. This will go on far into the future. A few days ago a "dreamer" dared to suggest the viability of a wonderful process called nuclear fusion. A solar energy fan slapped him down unfairly because some realities and facts were ignored. I tried to fill in some blanks.

Here's my response:

Renewable Energy; Nuclear Energy; Base Energy; What Does It All Mean?

On January 25 a science-fiction fan, dreamt of a future world with an energy source "mimicking or approximating the sun" – i.e. nuclear fusion ("We have the technology to advance").

On January 27 a writer tried to correct the dreamer by discounting the economic and performance viability of nuclear fusion ("Safe? Efficient? That's a letter writer's hope, and that's all it is"). Instead, this writer suggests dreaming about the potential of solar energy as the simple and safe energy solution.

Renewable energy sources will certainly be important future contributors of energy. But not "the main answer." Solar, wind, et al are not yet totally cost competitive, and if they were, probably wouldn't be able to provide "base load" power. Base load power sources are those that, on a regional basis, can provide the uninterrupted, constant MINIMUM demand for energy.

Solar and wind energy sources are often criticized for being intermittent in nature, and not a dependable provider of base load requirements. Currently, this requirement must be provided by fossil fuels or nuclear fission, and that will continue. Even Obama's Energy Information Administration anticipates that renewable energy will increase from the present 14% level to only 17% of total energy production by 2040. Fossil fuels will still dominate.

I believe the future of energy will be dominated by clean natural gas (replacing coal), and nuclear fission. And.....clean nuclear FUSION is a very real probability. Monitoring fusion research gives one reassurance that it is likely to become a "dream come true."