

IMPORTANT NOTE: *The topic of nuclear safety may or may not be added to the safer tech petition initiative that in 2026 was written to address non-ionizing radiation such as wireless & electricity. This decision to make changes in the 2027 resubmission depends upon petition initiative rules. If not, then nuclear safety law must be a separate petition initiative.*

A Nuclear Safety Ballot Committee for Massachusetts

Why a new ballot committee must run parallel to aggressive grassroots lobbying and meticulous text-analysis

Last Tree Laws' Substack | Author: Kirstin Beatty, Chair of Nuclear Safety at LastTreeLaws.com

In 2026 a powerful coalition of local watchdogs—including The Commonwealth Coalition for Democracy and Safe Energy (with the Sierra Club, Cape Downwinders, Clamshell Alliance, and others)—sprang into action to persuade the state senate to overturn the state house vote to repeal Massachusetts' ban on new nuclear reactors.

The current Massachusetts ban is especially *crucial now* given the history of weak federal nuclear regulations, and the current heightened deregulatory environment.

Because the Massachusetts Senate crucially voted down (32-8) Healey's proposal to overturn the nuclear radiation ban this past July, residents were given an election season break—but this election season is passing.

Beginning in 2027, state leadership will begin applying pressure throughout 2027 to turn legislator votes with 'reasonable' excuses.

Addressing state leadership moves to overturn the Massachusetts nuclear reactor ban is, like many popular public causes, an enormous task. Volunteering to meticulously analyze legislation is an enormous task, and at the same time legislators must be lobbied. To run parallel and assist in the long term, we filed a new ballot committee today: **Nuclear Safety at LastTreeLaws.com**. While this does not address the immediate analysis and lobbying needs and we have yet to seek feedback, our initial proposal may create a state research & advisory office on state and national nuclear science, policy, and law.

But first, how did the House vote to overturn the nuclear ban and how will and can our legislators be swayed?

The 2026 Old Logroll Trick in the House

Initially, the House Speaker provided significant House votes to overturn the ban (128-27). Because legislative leadership bundles dozens of completely separate energy, climate, and utility policies into a single giant bill—called ‘logrolling’—representatives are forced to vote on the entire package all at once. Many representatives claimed they did not realize the provision for a nuclear repeal was included in this package.

*As an aside, logrolling is a sign that our state representatives are **failing** to require representative, transparent state government.*

Log rolling worked once, and may work again, but pressure is being applied by state leadership in other ways as well.

The ‘She Wants It’ Trick

State leadership’s first part of pushing for nuclear reactors is pretending Massachusetts wants and needs them. She wants it, she gets it, whether or not she really wants it.

This consists of press that omits all mention of caution, danger, and loops into exaggerated and imagined benefits.

A. The Save Ratepayers Trick (Nukes for Data Centers)

This trick involves emphasizing how much Massachusetts wants lower energy costs. There are so many legislators that can use this as an excuse to shift opinions, just to take a ‘reasonable’ cost cutting approach.

This September Governor Healey set new requirements that data centers obtain community consent, comply with state environmental regulations, and obtain energy without burdening other ratepayers before obtaining tax breaks. The press rolled out by Healey’s administration posed as if data centers could actually get community consent, be desirable environmental neighbors, and obtain energy sustainably from space, or magic, or, more likely, **a risky and dangerous modular nuclear reactor**.

B. The Community Support Myth

Healey has expressed support for placement in highly populated, urban areas, with ‘community support.’ Never mind that highly populated areas have more human beings to be harmed, and never mind that these areas might well struggle to say no due to the constraints of poverty.

Even in an area with wealth, community support may simply mean that 5 yeas and 4 nays on a city council resulted in a modular nuclear reactor for a community of thousands, with the risk of explosion or radiation leakage assumed by the entire state.

C. The Model Environmental Nuke Reactor Omission Myth

If the mantra to save ratepayers financially or the dollar bills floated before communities fails, the model environmental nuclear reactor is a doozy.

The Healey energy brief noted a single modular reactor could achieve 2050 decarbonization goals, and entirely omitted hazards. For now, we will set aside Healey’s embedded environmental assumptions to focus on hazards.

1) Federal Oversight has Fallen into Corporate Abyss

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has a historic pattern of weak regulation & an internal culture that favors industry profits over safety. Over decades, hundreds of whistleblowers have been forced to step forward at personal and professional cost to prevent potentially catastrophic accidents. An investigation by the Center for Public Integrity highlighted a series of recent U.S. nuclear accidents—yet the NRC responded with negligible penalties.

Without independent, reliable oversight and regulation of this billion dollar industry, we face terrible home-grown nuclear threats.

2) The Devastating Reality of Nuclear Failures

History proves nuclear power is a high-stakes gamble, yet harm is systematically minimized to disarm public opposition. Following the 1979 accident at Three Mile Island, downwind residents reported acute suffering including sudden nausea, vomiting,

diarrhea, raw skin, and bleeding, alongside documented long-term spikes in local cancer rates. Yet, NRC summaries and initial AI summaries report that there were zero health effects.

When failures occur, the consequences are permanent. The disasters at both the Fukushima and Chernobyl nuclear reactors created massive exclusion zones, shifting in size based partly on political convenience and partly upon radiation testing. Fukushima's exclusion zone initially encompassed 311.5 square miles, while Chernobyl's permanent exclusion zone spans 2,223 square miles. Wind patterns carry radioactive plumes thousands of miles beyond these borders.

Scientists have heralded the ability of some bird species to survive Chernobyl's ionizing radiation, for it gives hope that continued survival is possible. Yet, even just the slow drip of low-level ionizing radiation leaks surrounding active reactors has been tied anecdotally and by research to a lower IQ, thyroid damage, cancer, impaired metabolism, and miscarriage.

The Endless Wear Down Trick

Grassroots coalitions repeatedly observe how industry easily passes legislation while popular bills or those for environmental canaries die, and that legislators at odds with state leadership are gradually worn down into abject compliance on Beacon Hill.

A. The Holding Bills Hostage Trick

The Speaker of the House and the Senate President control the committees that decide whether a bill advances or dies in a silent 'study order.' If a representative rebels, a lawmaker's personal bills—whether a passion project or hyper-local funding bill—will be frozen.

B. The Financial Leash (Leadership Stipends) national and world-wide nuclear policy, law, and science

Massachusetts uniquely incentivizes falling in line through direct compensation. On top of a baseline legislative salary, lawmakers can make thousands of extra dollars annually

through leadership appointments. Without a stipend, legislators can suffer financially. Legislative leadership can remove a legislator's staff as well.

C. Chronological Exhaustion (Midnight Deadlines)

While new 2026 rules technically allow negotiations to stretch into December, leadership historically uses time as a weapon. By withholding major text until the final hours of a legislative session, rank-and-file members are physically and mentally exhausted. Faced with a choice of passing a flawed, massive 100-page bill filled with hidden concessions or watching the entire state budget collapse, they are coerced into voting 'Yes.'

The Trojan Horse 2027 Trick

With a press announcement, Healey's Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Rebecca Tepper doubled down on the small footprint of 'small' modular reactors while avoiding any mention of dangerous ionizing radiation.

A. A Big 'Nuclear' Impact

The term small footprint is a misnomer, just given the ability of nuclear reactors to infinitely melt down and spew dangerous ionizing radiation. Fukushima, which 'only' quarantined about 300 square miles, is continually discharging imperfectly treated radiation-laced water into the ocean against the will of neighbors. Japan's plan is to infinitely discharge roughly 460,000 liters per day, or roughly 120–140 Olympic-size swimming pools of water. This water is used for cooling to prevent a secondary meltdown or explosion from the fuel's ongoing radioactive decay. Japan maintains that it can no longer store this water logistically.

B. An Illusion of Small

Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) present massive systemic issues:

- **More Radioactive Waste:** A major Stanford University study found that because of their design, SMRs actually produce 2 to 30 times more radioactive waste per unit of energy generated than traditional large-scale reactors.

- **Not Actually Small:** While they produce less electricity, the physical footprints, containment vessels, heavy shielding, and cooling infrastructures required are still massive heavy-industrial operations.
- **The Same Safety Risks:** They still generate highly concentrated radiation, operate under intense pressure, and pose long-term containment risks.

Ironically, in the same fashion, the Federal Communications Commission has called setting macro cell tower antennas on utility poles ‘small’ cells, even when these are the same macro antennas and thus, by closer proximity, effectively more powerful in distributing non-ionizing radiation, a cousin to nuclear’s ionizing radiation.

Stop Industry Pleasing

In Massachusetts, the state legislature and Governor Healey initiated tax breaks for data centers. Given public opposition to data centers, these tax breaks were paused this past June shortly before election season, and this September Healey set tax breaks contingent upon a series of data center requirements, one of which could be temporarily solved with a ‘small’ modular nuclear reactor.

The Antidote to Plotting

If leadership sways legislators by relying on exhaustion, concealment of the fine print, and blind spots, then the only antidote is unyielding public scrutiny. We need auditors, editors, and rigorous fact checkers.

This means mega-packages cannot be casually slipped through the dark if we refuse to let them. Every hearing, joint committee, and every line of text must be picked apart by independent eyes.

Waking Beholden Representatives

We cannot wait for a ballot vote to engage. Grassroots momentum requires us to pierce the bubble around our legislators and flood their offices with direct, targeted lobbying. When individuals show up, the excuse ‘I didn’t know what was in the bill’ evaporates. By forcing our local representatives to look directly at the fine print, we strip their cover and force them to push against the leadership machine.

Our legislators must be beholden to the people, and must understand our our petition initiatives deserve to be supported rather than undermined.

Listen to Independent Experts

Adopt Prudent Risk Avoidance

Instead of deploying emergency guardrails to offset the state's own premature tax breaks, we need experts that can define in advance how best to or how best not to proceed with technology with respect to the full range of technological impacts from health to civil rights.

A Petition Initiative Solution Exists, Or Another

Our current, long-developed petition initiative for NON-ionizing radiation, which encompasses electricity and wireless but not nuclear reactors, establishes an independent Office of Research and Technology Optimization (ORTO) that researches and provides recommendations to align technology with public safety, environmental health, civil and other rights. This is a petition initiative under the ballot committee Safer Tech at LastTreeLaws.com, and details can be easily be found on the site.

Logically, the same structure could be applied to nuclear radiation (or ionizing radiation). However, the solution must match the circumstances, and must match the wisdom of the existing grassroots coalitions involved, so time is needed to prepare a full proposal.

A Path to Provide Missing Oversight

An office with nuclear or ionizing radiation expertise could independently identify existing and potential nuclear risks; assess exposures; recommend best practices for managing the existing, retired Plymouth reactor; provide expert legal testimony; provide meticulous legal analysis of state and federal laws regarding nuclear facilities; and make recommendations regarding national and world-wide nuclear policy, law, and science that protect Massachusetts.

Always Be Prepared

Ready Signature Gathering Infrastructure Now

We need to prepare to petition successfully regarding nuclear reactors/ ionizing radiation. We need to hear from individuals, businesses, and coalitions who can help.

Nuclear Sign-Ups

Sign up at <https://lasttreelaws.com/volunteer/> as an individual, business, or group to join the nuclear safety campaign. We've saved time by using the same volunteer form for all campaigns. As this is a new petition initiative, we will need some prep time to integrate additional materials, complete remaining paperwork, and add donation options. Regardless, we hope to see you sign up!

Support the Non-Ionizing Radiation Campaign, too

Join Our Safer Tech Signature Drive

If you are not familiar with the overlap between non-ionizing (e.g., wireless & electricity) and ionizing (e.g., nuclear) radiation's public and environmental health impacts, stay tuned. On the website, you can read the already certified NON-ionizing radiation petition initiative or the summary, and you can also read a few [blog posts](#) or [articles](#) about non-ionizing radiation health impacts.

This fall of 2026 we are preparing a critical trial run for the non-ionizing radiation petition under the ballot committee **Safer Tech at LastTreeLaws.com** that will test signature infrastructure, build public support, and gather feedback on our petition, with the expectation that the full signature drive will occur in the fall of 2027.

Supporting this drive should, in the long term, also funnel into support for a nuclear safety signature drive.

Online Source:

Kirstin Beatty. *LastTreeLaw's Substack*. 9-15-2026. A Nuclear Safety Ballot Committee for Massachusetts: Why a new ballot committee must run parallel to aggressive grassroots lobbying and meticulous text-analysis. <https://lasttreelaws.substack.com/p/a-nuclear-safety-ballot-committee?r=7lm4nv> Note: The online article contains additional links.