

Weaver: Nation's priorities favor nuclear power

By PETER MEAD
Of the Emerald

Back in Eugene to stump for re-election, Fourth Dist. Rep. Jim Weaver found time Friday noon to speak to a SEARCH class on federal energy policy.

Students in the "Oregon's Environmental Issues" class jammed 332 Gilbert to hear Weaver describe the congressional politics of opposing nuclear power use.

"Our priorities have not only not changed in this nation," Weaver said, "but they have actually gone back" to favoring nuclear power more than ever.

Weaver, who favors solar power over atomic energy, is the acting chairer of the House energy subcommittee. He told the class about a congressional hearing last Wednesday where he said he "grilled" the

director of the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA), Dr. Robert Seamans.

Though Seamans admitted methods for disposal of nuclear wastes are still unsafe, Weaver said, Seamans insisted nuclear power use is safe.

"That's like saying a car and its gas mileage are two different things," Weaver said. He said he believes nuclear power will be impractical until about 1995, "but we know we can use solar energy today."

Weaver said the ERDA, staffed mainly with the 7,000 people from the old Atomic Energy Commission, favors atomic energy far above any other form. A former Secretary of the Army, William Anders, is the chairer of the Nuclear Reg-

ulatory Commission, the only federal agency assigned as a watchdog over the ERDA.

The greatest hope for changing the nation's energy policy, Weaver said, lies in electing a President who supports development of other forms of energy.

"With a little leadership, we'd have an enormous difference" in congressional opposition to nuclear power, Weaver said. At this point, he said, 20 members of the House have joined to actively oppose nuclear power use, and about 150 to 170 congressmen vote against nuclear power increases.

Weaver expects more opposition to nuclear power, however, since over 50 representatives retire after this term, opening doors to younger candidates whom he thinks may help change federal

energy policy.

"Right now, we're trying to put together a broad-based political coalition" to oppose nuclear development, Weaver said.

The first step in doing that, he thinks, is to convince labor and the construction industry that solar energy serves their interests better than nuclear energy. For the energy produced, building solar energy-producing units creates at least five times the jobs as building atomic energy units, he said. Atomic energy, on the other hand, puts large amounts of money in the control of the nation's technocracy.

Weaver predicted atomic energy could become a major issue in the presidential race, if Californians pass a ballot measure for stringent nuclear safeguards in their primary

election this spring.

In a question and answer session, Weaver was asked to outline his stand on legislation that would amend the Organic Act of 1897, interpreted by federal courts to ban clear-cutting in national forests.

"I will not take a stand on the issue," said Weaver, "but tackle each issue in the bill as it comes." He said arranging a compromise, between environmentalists wanting detailed requirements for clear-cutting and industry lobbyists wanting less regulation, should not be "that big a fight."

Weaver may greatly influence that legislation, he said, because he ranks third in the forestry subcommittee drafting it, and the chairer and second-ranking members are both campaigning for the Senate.

747 to replace B-1 bomber?

SEATTLE (AP) — The Broad-beamed lady of America's skies, Boeing's 747, a warplane?

Perhaps as a transport, say Air Force officials. But they don't want it as a replacement to the supersonic B-1 bomber.

The Brookings Institute recently suggested that the 747, with its load-carrying capability and long range, could work in place of the B-1.

The B-1 is primarily designed to carry air-launched cruise missiles ALCM's and Brookings' Al Quanback said the sub-sonic 747 would be able to stay in the air longer than the B-1, and could carry more of the missiles in its payload.

Both planes have the same

range, about 6,000 miles.

Air Force officials said use of 747s as strategic bombers was considered last year, but dismissed. They said the ALCM being developed by Boeing has a range of less than 1,000 miles and that the 747 could not successfully deliver the missiles to within striking range of enemy targets.

Also, "if you shoot down a 747 with a big payload, in this case 60 to 70 ALCMs, you lose a heck of a lot," said Maj. Leo Terrill of the Air Force information office in the Pentagon.

Each B-1 bomber is expected to cost \$88 million, compared with

\$35 million for the 747.

Though the 747 has been ruled out as a weapons-delivery system, the Air Force says it is considering the big aircraft for a cargo and tanker plane. A final decision on whether to buy some planes for that purpose is expected later this year.

There is also in the works consideration of using the 747 to carry intercontinental ballistic missiles in an effort to make the ICBMs more mobile.

An Air Force spokesman said, "The cost to carry big Minuteman missiles around is hellish, but the concept is still alive."

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