

Academies of Sciences confirm: We must keep the ***option of nuclear power on the table***

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At a glance

- A study by TA-SWISS provides new evidence in the debate over lifting the ban on the construction of new nuclear power plants.
- Modern nuclear power is safe, climate-friendly, and complements renewable energy: Those who reject it make Switzerland dependent on other countries in the winter and end up paying billions more.
- The Alliance for a Secure Electricity Supply is calling for the ban on new construction to be lifted quickly.

The interdisciplinary study conducted by ETH, PSI, the University of Bern, and other partners is the most comprehensive investigation to date on new nuclear technologies in Switzerland. Its findings are compelling and clear.

1. Nuclear power is a technology of the future, and it is available today. Modern reactors and small modular reactors (SMRs) are technically mature. Thanks to passive safety systems, they remain reliable even in the event of a severe accident. According to the study, they are among the cleanest sources of electricity in terms of climate impact, health effects, ecosystems, and land use.

2. Nuclear power and renewables go hand in hand. The study dispels the "either-or" myth: New nuclear power does not replace renewables; it complements them. It provides electricity especially in the winter, when solar systems produce little power. As a result, less battery storage, fewer reserves, and less curtailed solar power are needed.

3. Without nuclear power, there will be a shortage of electricity in the winter. According to the study, without new nuclear power plants, Switzerland will still have to import over 10 terawatt-hours of electricity in the winter as late as 2070. That is more than twice as much as is considered acceptable. And neighboring countries will also need their own electricity. With new nuclear power, winter imports will drop significantly. In the most favorable scenarios, Switzerland will even export electricity in the winter.

4. Without nuclear power, it will be expensive. Nuclear power plants built early on reduce the costs of the energy system by billions of francs. According to the study, if there is a shortage of reliably produced, low-carbon electricity by 2050, electricity prices will rise, investments will decline, and the economy will lose momentum. These losses cannot be recovered by 2070.

5. Long-term operation is the obvious solution. If the Laufen, Gösgen, and Leibstadt plants operate for up to 70 years, the model estimates this would save 7 to 12 billion francs. At the same time, winter imports and electricity prices would decrease during the critical phase. In addition, the expertise, personnel, and supply chains needed for a new plant would be preserved.

A secure and affordable electricity supply is a fundamental prerequisite for Switzerland's competitiveness as a business location. That is why, from

economiesuisse's perspective, energy policy needs as many options for action as possible rather than technology bans. In addition to the accelerated expansion of renewables, grid infrastructure, and integration into the European energy network, this also includes nuclear energy. The ban on new nuclear power plants should therefore be lifted. This will allow Switzerland to maintain the ability to produce sufficient, reliable, low-carbon electricity domestically, even in the long term.

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