

# A look across the continent at the COG GBM

*The COG General Business Meeting, held Sept. 20 in Cambridge, Ontario gave members and supplier participants a chance to share information on their own operations and to take a higher-level view of the state of the industry across North America.*



*Don Hoffman, past president of the American Nuclear Society (middle) along with John Barrett, current president of the Canadian Nuclear Association, above with COG president Fred Dermakar, shared thoughts on the North American nuclear outlook at the COG GBM in September.*

**K**eynote speakers Don Hoffman, past American Nuclear Society president and John Barrett, current Canadian Nuclear Association president, shared a vision for nuclear as a powerful contributor to the energy mix, the environment and the economy of both countries.

Afterward, the meeting continued with a tour of the BWXT Canada's Cambridge, Ontario facility.

In the first of a three-part series, below is a look at the state of nuclear in the US through the eyes of Hoffman, an active participant in the politics of nuclear, south of the border. In our Winter 2017 edition of COGnizant, we will feature the two other meeting highlights:

**Part 2:** A Canadian outlook from John Barrett's perspective; and

**Part 3:** A tour of the BWXT Canada facility.

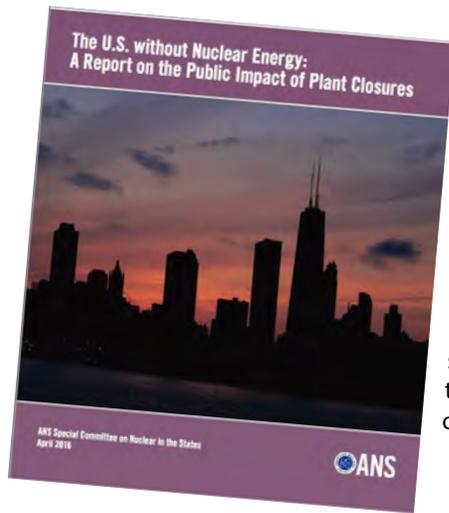
## Nuclear American Style

The future for nuclear in the United States is, in a word, complicated. And Donald R. Hoffman is determined to make it clear.

If you've met Hoffman you may have ascertained he's a man who does what he sets his mind to, and quickly. With a brain that moves at the speed of light, followed in close step by his tongue, Hoffman has spent a good part of his career unpacking myths and trying to inject reality into policy and regulation for the American nuclear industry.

Hoffman formed his Rockville, Maryland-based regulatory and engineering resolution consultancy in 1985. Today, the past president of the American Nuclear Society is leading the nuclear charge on Capitol Hill and across the US through his not-for-profit organization, Sensible Energy Matters to America (SEMA). He's working with legislators to achieve a level-playing field for nuclear operators who, he says, are feeling economic pain as a result of political policy decisions that have been starving even the most efficiently-operated nuclear plants. With several high-performing plants already in decommissioning and many others on a deathwatch, Hoffman is working against the clock to get meaningful change that will allow the assets to reach their potential and continue to serve a valuable role in the US energy mix.

"Despite how well our nuclear plants are operating at the highest levels of safety and in highest levels of performance; 92-94 per cent capacity factors and delivering on the nuclear promise... despite all that these plants are unable to compete in the market," Hoffman says, describing the subsidies for renewables and other



conditions favourable to other energy sources that have placed the American nuclear fleets in peril.

“(We are) having difficulties being able to explain to our policy and law makers the unique value of nuclear science and technology... and to ensure that nuclear stays in our mix.”

mission. A fervent believer in the holistic benefit of nuclear as a valuable contributor to sustainability, Hoffman has ensured the two presidential candidates have the facts on the nuclear industry and definitive policy details to create a level energy-playing field.

“Our electricity market is severely flawed. It favours subsidized wind and solar... the message we’ve been sending is the unique value of nuclear is predicated on energy, the economy and the environment” in supplying a predictable and stable grid with 24/7 electricity that runs when needed, that “contributes to fuel and technology diversity” while benefitting the climate change mitigation strategy and helping the economy, Hoffman says.

“One nuclear plant in New York State creates half a billion dollars in sales of goods and services,” says Hoffman, noting that is based on a one-unit plant, with exponential outcomes for multi-unit operations. His economic message is the plants contribute to above-average salaries, strong house prices and have a positive impact on local taxes, which in turn strengthens the economy and local infrastructure; all of which means a higher standard of life and well being for the American people.

It is not a new message for the nuclear industry, shared often and backed by data in many jurisdictions worldwide. To bring it home to US legislators, the American Nuclear Society Special Committee on Nuclear in the States, co-chaired by Hoffman, issued The US Without Nuclear Energy, A Report on the Public Impact of Plant Closures (see bottom of article for link). The widely shared document provides the proof points on the detriment to the country on a state-by-state basis should the US continue with the status quo energy policy. “It paints a pretty bleak picture if you have no nuclear,” notes Hoffman.

The message is gaining traction. In New York State, which gets about 30 per cent of its electricity from nuclear, the state was under threat of losing several units due to non-viable economics. This summer, it adopted a zero-emission credit for nuclear similar to the incentives provided to wind and solar as well as an additional market price top up, all included in New York’s Clean Energy Standard.

In approving the measures, New York Public Service Commission Chair Audrey Zibelman said, “If these plants close abruptly, they in all likelihood will be replaced by the attributes of expanded fossil fuel base generation. This will impair our ability to achieve our environmental goals.”

In addition to hammering home the message, state by state, Hoffman and the American nuclear industry hope to achieve federal changes as well. Hoffman has been working to have “national assets legislation” passed, which would include measures,

similar to those brought in by New York but implemented US-wide.

Hoffman says he has more than 20 governors now informed on the “unique value” of nuclear in the energy mix. His hope is the facts on nuclear’s contribution, shared by the industry for years, about a strong energy mix, the environmental benefits and a vibrant economy will finally become as apparent to legislators as it has been to those working in the industry all along.

## Sources:

This article is based on a presentation by Donald Hoffman, past president of the American Nuclear Society and co-chair of an ANS special committee on nuclear in the states at the CANDU Owners Group General Business Meeting, Sept. 20, 2016.

It includes additional information from the following sources:

**ANS: The US without Nuclear Energy**

<http://cdn.ans.org/pi/publicpolicy/docs/the-us-without-nuclear-energy-report.pdf>.

**E&E Publishing: Campaign 2016: Meet Trump’s ‘token nuke guy’**

<http://www.eenews.net/stories/1060044016>

**Hoffman, D.: June 2016. Presenting the nuclear narrative, Chicago, Ill.**

[https://www.eiseverywhere.com/file\\_uploads/6dbd-da911158b325ed6f7c550af95072\\_00-DonHoffman-PresentingtheNuclearNarrative\\_Revised.pdf](https://www.eiseverywhere.com/file_uploads/6dbd-da911158b325ed6f7c550af95072_00-DonHoffman-PresentingtheNuclearNarrative_Revised.pdf)

**RTO Insider: August 2016. New York clean energy standard nuclear subsidy**

<https://www.rtoinsider.com/new-york-clean-energy-standard-nuclear-subsidy-29816/>

## IN COGNIZANT WINTER 2017

In our first issue of 2017, COGnizant will feature more highlights of the September General Business Meeting including Canadian Nuclear Association President John Barrett’s views on the state of nuclear in Canada as well as a tour of BWXT Canada’s Cambridge facility.

