

Energy protesters blockade nuclear power station

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Activists yesterday blockaded the front and rear entrances of a nuclear power station in Hartlepool, Teesside, to protest at the government's recently proclaimed support for a new boost for nuclear energy. About 20 arrived at 8am as a shift was starting work, draped a banner reading "No More" on a fence, locked themselves to welded-together tubes, and lay down on access roads.

Earlier this year the government said nuclear power could make a "significant contribution" to future energy needs. The Hartlepool action is part of a campaign to highlight the drawbacks of traditional sources of power and to stress the need for a global reduction in energy use and the development of renewable sources.

The protesters are based at a 10-day camp set up by the action group Reclaim Power a mile from the giant coal-fired Drax power station at Selby, North Yorkshire. Drax, the largest plant of its kind in Europe, generates 7% of Britain's electricity. But Reclaim Power claims it is also the single biggest emitter of greenhouse gases in the UK, pumping out 20.8m tonnes of carbon dioxide every year.

Tomorrow, those camped in what has been dubbed "megawatt valley" - site of Eggborough and Ferrybridge power stations as well as Drax - will march on the power station and attempt to close it by direct action. One of the protesters at Hartlepool, Kathryn Tulip, said: "People have entered this site on foot but no vehicles or heavy equipment has gone in. We had expected cutting crews to have come out to us by now but no one has turned up yet. We hope we'll be back for the big day at Drax."

She added that the group wanted to tell British **Energy**, the government and the public that they did not want a new generation of nuclear power stations: "Hartlepool is due to be decommissioned in 2014 but it is likely that this could be the site for another nuclear station if the industry has its way. The government's recent energy review says that nuclear power is the answer to climate change. But nuclear power is not fossil fuel-free and we have to reduce our consumption of power." At the camp in the shadow of the Drax towers, Emma Pegg, 29, from Leeds, said: "We are already feeling the destructive effects of a climate which is in crisis. I urge people to come to the

camp, learn more about climate change and ways to live sustainably. And perhaps even to help shut down Drax."

A spokesman for British Energy said of the Hartlepool protest: "British Energy respects and recognises people's right to protest about what is a vital issue for all of us and have no objection to peaceful and lawful demonstration. Our prime concern is to safeguard our staff, the power station and the protesters themselves."



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