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Kaliningrad Bans Vote on Nuclear Plant

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Kaliningrad residents won't get a chance to vote on whether they want a nulcear power plant in their backyard.

The Baltic exclave's legislature has blocked a public referendum on the construction of a nuclear power plant, Interfax reported Monday.

Deputies agreed that a regional referendum was "impossible" because nuclear policy is the prerogative of the federal government, the report said, citing the legislature's press service.

A representative for the group opposing construction of the Baltic Nuclear Power Plant told Interfax that it would challenge the lawmakers' decision in court.

Rosatom began work on the plant, which will provide power to Kaliningrad region and neighboring Baltic states, in February 2010.

Local opposition to the construction has been pushing for a referendum on the project since April. A campaign group sent the regional legislature a request to name the date of the referendum in July.

Lithuanian Foreign Minster Audronius Azubalis called for public consultations on construction of the power plant in line with the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment, to which Russia is a signatory, during a meeting with Kaliningrad Governor Nikolai Tsukanov on Sunday.

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