

‘Green’ energy efforts need a boost: Chen Chien-jen

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Democratic Progressive Party vice presidential candidate Chen Chien-jen, left, walks through a crowd of reporters on his way to give an interview at a radio station in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: Liu Hsin-de, Taipei Times

The government is not working hard enough to explore “green” energy options, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) vice presidential candidate Chen Chien-jen (陳建生) said yesterday, adding that President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) was looking for excuses in comments about a potential energy crisis in the nation.

In a conversation with Ma when the president visited Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co (TSMC) on Wednesday, TSMC chairman Morris Chang (蔡力行) said that the two major issues that concern investors are a possible power shortage in 2017 and protests by environmentalists over industrial development projects.

Ma said that using sources of renewable energy to replace nuclear power was unrealistic.

“The president is looking for excuses for something he has not done well,” Chen said during an interview on SuperFM 98.5 with host Cheng Hung-yi (鄭鴻義). “Taiwan has a good environment for developing green energy, but the government has never worked hard to explore it.”

Chen said that the DPP has a set of good policies to develop “green” energy and he is confident that the party could do the job well to prevent Taiwan from having to risk a nuclear disaster.

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Taiwan does not have the right conditions to use nuclear energy, Chen said, adding that people mistakenly think that nuclear power is clean and cheap.

“If you take into account the costs for handling nuclear waste, you find out how expensive it is to use nuclear power,” Chen said.

Protests by environmentalists should not be a problem if development projects minimize potential damage to the environment while being transparent and communicating honestly with the public, he said.

For instance, many environmentalists protested the plan to build a science park in Taichung’s Houli District (后里) when he served as National Science Council minister.

“Environmental groups have every right to protest, but the government has to come up with hard evidence to show that a project would not have any impact on the environment,” Chen said. “I initiated public hearings to make public all information. In fact, I was the first [council minister] to hold such a public hearing.”

Chen said that if TSMC runs into opposition when planning a new plant, Chang should do the same.

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