

June 9, 2020



The Honorable James Inhofe
 Chairman
 Senate Armed Services Committee
 218 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
 Ranking Member
 Senate Armed Services Committee
 218 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Inhofe and Ranking Member Reed:

We write to respectfully request that you include the bipartisan Nuclear Energy Leadership Act (S. 903) in the FY2021 National Defense Authorization Act. The bipartisan committee amendment on nuclear energy filed by Senators Tillis, Manchin, Cramer, Heinrich, Blackburn, Duckworth, McSally, and Jones would add important provisions from NELA to the NDAA, and we support the amendment.

NELA would accelerate the commercialization of a new generation of nuclear reactors that are designed to provide energy in multiple ways beyond traditional large-scale nuclear electricity production. These new nuclear energy products are important components in a modern, clean, resilient energy system that can meet civilian and defense needs. With China and Russia now developing and exporting advanced reactors to strategically significant countries throughout the world, it is critical that the U.S. reassert leadership in this geopolitically important field.

NELA was reported out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee by voice vote and is cosponsored by nearly one-quarter of the Senate. Cosponsorship is bipartisan and includes eight members of your committee.

Throughout our country's history, military and civilian applications of nuclear technology have developed synergistically. Breakthroughs in civilian nuclear energy benefit the military, and military breakthroughs benefit civilian energy production.

In that tradition, the committee-reported NELA includes a significant role for the Department of Defense. The bill requires the Secretary of Energy to consult and coordinate with the Secretary of Defense on a long-term nuclear power purchase agreement pilot program. Projects to be operated by the Department of Defense would be eligible for the demonstration project section of the bill. Finally, the advanced nuclear fuel section of the bill requires consideration of the fuel needs of the Department of Defense. Because of the large role for the Department of Defense, the House of Representatives referred NELA to the House Armed Services Committee, in addition to other committees.

Your committee has shown great leadership on nuclear energy issues in past National Defense Authorization Acts, including the fiscal 2019 law, which created a pilot program for microreactors.

Because of the civilian, military, and geopolitical value of U.S. leadership in nuclear energy technology, we ask that this year's National Defense Authorization Act include the Nuclear Energy Leadership Act.

Sincerely,

List of signers next page

June 9, 2020

American Security Project
Advanced Reactor Concepts
American Public Power Association
Advanced Nuclear Weapons Alliance (ANWA) Advocacy
Bipartisan Policy Center Action (BPC Action)
BWX Technologies, Inc.
Center for Climate and Energy Solutions
Clean Air Task Force
ClearPath Action
Duke Energy
Edison Electric Institute
Energy for Humanity
Energy Northwest
Framatome Inc.
GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy
General Atomics
Generation Atomic
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)
Kairos Power LLC
Lightbridge Corporation
The Nature Conservancy
Nuclear Energy Institute
Nuclear Innovation Alliance
NuScale
Orano USA
Southern Company
TerraPower
Terrestrial Energy USA
Third Way
Thorium Energy Alliance
Ultra Safe Nuclear Corporation
UrencoUSA
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Global Energy Institute
U.S. Nuclear Industry Council
Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems
Virginia Nuclear Energy Consortium
X-Energy, LLC
Xcel Energy