

# Nuclear innovation is key to America's economic future

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As energy prices continue to soar, President Biden is offering Americans a choice between a clean environment or a strong economy.

This is a false and misleading choice. The most cost-effective way to ensure a reliable electricity supply and reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, while fostering our national, economic, and energy security interests, is through American innovation—including nuclear innovation.

Nuclear power currently provides 19 percent of the power generated in the U.S. Today's nuclear plants are resilient, reliable, and emission-free—yet advancements to nuclear technology remain stalled and Democrats still often stigmatize nuclear power. Because

nuclear power plants operate at full capacity more than 92 percent of the time, these reactors are our country's most reliable clean energy source.

Our domestic nuclear energy industry also plays an important role in job creation and economic growth. The U.S. nuclear industry supports nearly half a million American jobs and contributes about \$60 billion to the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) each year. Specifically, a traditional nuclear power plant employs approximately 7,000 workers during construction, 500-800 workers at a time during its 80+ years of operation and contributes millions of dollars on an annual basis to local economies through federal and state tax revenues. The U.S. nuclear industry also has the highest paying jobs in the entire electric power generation sector with salaries that are 30 percent higher than the average local profession and up to 25 percent more per hour than the next best-paying electricity-related job. Not to mention, 19.9 percent of all U.S. nuclear utility employees are veterans. Additionally, a nuclear power plant only requires a 1.3 square mile footprint per megawatt to generate clean, 24/7 electricity that will power over 750,000 homes.

Despite enormous economic and environmental benefits, the radical left has worked against this robust source of carbon-free energy. This simply makes no sense. From the misguided proposal to close the Diablo Canyon nuclear reactor in California to countries like Germany shutting down all of their nuclear plants—these policies often lead to higher emissions, energy insecurity, and ultimately higher electricity prices for American citizens.

Even worse, innovative, advanced nuclear reactor technologies are currently stalled in a cumbersome regulatory process that was designed for legacy reactors. Unlike the large, light-water reactors that have provided reliable power for decades, advanced reactors are smaller, more flexible, often have built-in safety features, and utilize different fuels. A one-size-fits-all approach simply does not make sense with today's diverse advanced reactors. That's why we need targeted investment in critical research facilities that speed the development of advanced reactor technology here in the U.S., and we must take the necessary steps to reform the licensing process to expedite the development and commercialization of innovative reactor designs. Without these actions, U.S. innovation will decline and our adversaries, such as China and Russia, will take the lead on the technologies of the future.

If we want to see nuclear power that is versatile, affordable, and able to meet the growing global demand for emission-free power, we must fix the current regulatory process and open the door for American innovators to bring the next generation of nuclear technologies to the domestic and global marketplace. These advanced nuclear technologies will be instrumental in the revival of American energy dominance moving forward and will play a major role in reducing global emissions. We can no longer accept stagnation brought about by outdated regulations—especially at a time when American innovators are willing and able to take on the challenge of re-establishing the United States as a global leader in nuclear technology.

That's why House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy (Calif.) created the Energy, Climate, and Conservation Task Force and the Jobs and the Economy Task Force—to help identify and develop policy solutions that bolster energy innovation, increase American competitiveness, and help promote highly paid American jobs.

House Republicans back sensible, realistic, and effective policies to address global emissions and meet our Nation's needs for affordable, reliable, and secure energy. It is clear nuclear power should be a part of that solution.

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