

March 23, 2026

The Honorable Bob Latta
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Energy
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kathy Castor
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Energy
2323 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

**Subject: Questions for the Record from January 7, 2026, hearing entitled,
“American Energy Dominance: Dawn of the New Nuclear Era”**

Dear Chairman Latta and Ranking Member Castor:


Thank you for the opportunity to testify at this well-timed and informative hearing. It is my hope that you benefited as much as I did from the exchange of information and dialogue.

Attached are my answers to the questions (QFRs) that I received from Subcommittee members.

Please let me know if you need more information.

I look forward to our future engagements.

Yours very sincerely,



Maria Korsnick

BRETT GUTHRIE, KENTUCKY
CHAIRMAN

FRANK PALLONE, JR., NEW JERSEY
RANKING MEMBER

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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March 10, 2026

Ms. Maria Korsnick
President and CEO
Nuclear Energy Institute
1201 F Street NW
Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Ms. Korsnick:

Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Energy on Wednesday, January 7, 2026, to testify at the hearing entitled “American Energy Dominance: Dawn of the New Nuclear Era.”

Pursuant to the Rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the hearing record remains open for ten business days to permit Members to submit additional questions for the record, which are attached. The format of your responses to these questions should be as follows: (1) the name of the Member whose question you are addressing, (2) the complete text of the question you are addressing in bold, and (3) your answer to that question in plain text.

To facilitate the printing of the hearing record, please respond to these questions with a transmittal letter by the close of business on Wednesday, November 12, 2026. Your responses should be mailed to Seth Ricketts Legislative Clerk, Committee on Energy and Commerce, 2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 and e-mailed to Seth.Ricketts@mail.house.gov.

Thank you again for your time and effort preparing and delivering testimony before the Subcommittee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert E. Latta". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" being the most prominent.

Robert E. Latta
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy

cc: Kathy Castor, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy

Attachment

Additional Questions for the Record

The Honorable Bob Latta (R-OH)

1. Our current operating fleet relies heavily on critical minerals such as Lithium 7. Li-7 is yet another critical mineral that China and Russia are large producers of. Given the Trump Administration's emphasis on the importance of critical minerals and the actions already taken by the administration to help revive conventional nuclear and bolster the emerging advanced nuclear industry, are there any supply chain concerns you have regarding Lithium 7 or other critical minerals?

- a. Where does the current operating fleet source Lithium 7?

The U.S. operating fleet is fully reliant on imported enriched lithium-7, which is used in pressurized water reactors to maintain proper chemical balance in reactor coolant systems. Industry estimates indicate that approximately 300 kilograms of lithium-7 are used annually in the United States, with an estimated market value of \$15 million to \$45 million per year. Current supply comes from a limited number of countries, including China, Russia, Chile, Switzerland, Japan, Germany, and India. The United States currently does not have domestic lithium-7 enrichment capability, although both private-sector and Department of Energy efforts are exploring options to restore this capability through the development of new advanced technologies.

- b. Do you have any recommendations on how to build out the domestic supply chain of Li-7?

A high concentration of mineral mining and processing in countries not aligned with the United States poses significant challenges for supply diversity, particularly for sectors such as nuclear energy that rely on technically specialized and tightly regulated inputs. China currently controls approximately 85 percent of global rare earth element processing capacity, while Russia remains a key supplier of specialized isotopes such as lithium-7, which are critical to nuclear operations and have limited global sources.

Because these markets are relatively small and technically specialized, even modest geopolitical, regulatory, or logistical disruptions can create availability constraints or price volatility. Companies typically manage this risk through long-term supply agreements, while efforts are underway to strengthen domestic capabilities and diversify supply. A disruption in the supply of enriched lithium-7 could lead to refueling delays for pressurized water reactors and challenges maintaining proper reactor coolant pH, potentially increasing corrosion of fuel cladding, stress corrosion cracking in piping components, and accelerated degradation of reactor internals and steam generators.

Although promising technologies are under development by U.S. industry and the Department of Energy, imports will remain essential in the near to intermediate term due to the lack of scalable domestic alternatives. Maintaining open and predictable trade flows while strategically expanding domestic supply capacity will be critical to supporting the current fleet, enabling advanced reactor deployment, and preserving U.S. competitiveness

in the global nuclear energy market.

2. How do existing nuclear sites, like V.C. Summer, reduce project risk, cost, and timelines compared to greenfield development, and how can federal policy better support redevelopment of these sites?

Existing nuclear sites, such as V.C. Summer Nuclear Station, offer significant advantages over greenfield development by leveraging pre-existing infrastructure, regulatory approvals, and community support. These sites already have established transmission interconnections and cooling water access, reducing both upfront capital costs and construction risk. Prior environmental reviews, site characterization, and safety analyses can be reused or updated, shortening licensing timelines and decreasing regulatory uncertainty. Additionally, these sites typically benefit from a trained workforce, established emergency planning, and local community familiarity with nuclear operations. A 2022 Department of Energy report estimated that an advanced reactor sited at a brownfield or retired fossil fuel site could potentially decrease the overnight capital cost of construction by 15 to 35 percent compared to a greenfield site. Federal policy can better support the redevelopment of these sites through ensuring that they qualify for Energy Community and/or Nuclear Community bonuses, supply chain and workforce support, and streamlined permitting and licensing reviews.

3. All fuel cycle facilities aside from enrichment facilities may begin construction at risk nine months after submitting a Part 70 application. No radioactive material or enrichment activity may occur before NRC licensing and operational readiness review. However, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's interpretations of Section 193 of the Atomic Energy Act prohibit enrichment facilities from beginning construction until the license is granted.

- a. Are there any added safety or security benefits by delaying construction until a license is granted?

No. NEI is not aware of any added safety or security benefit from requiring an enrichment applicant to delay construction until the NRC issues a license. No special nuclear material may be possessed or introduced, and no enrichment activity may occur, unless and until the NRC has completed its review, issued the license, and any applicable operational readiness requirements have been satisfied. In addition, the existing regulations in 10 CFR Part 70 already provide the NRC authority to ensure that the proposed equipment, facilities, programs, and controls are adequate to protect public health and safety and to minimize danger to life or property before licensed activities begin. As a result, delaying construction does not provide meaningful incremental safety or security benefit.

- b. If not, given bipartisan efforts to expand domestic enrichment capacity, should Congress clarify the law to allow enrichment facilities to begin construction after submitting a license application?

Clarification of the law would benefit a domestic supply chain and reinforce the U.S. capability to attain American Energy Dominance. This could be achieved by allowing for foundations, nuclear-island shells, and other similar activities

under the same timelines as pre-construction to improve process efficiency.

The Honorable Rick Allen (R-GA)

1. From my perspective, we need to be doing everything that we can to ensure that this country leads the world in energy abundance and availability. Anything less than that is a threat to national security, which is an unacceptable outcome. As we look at countries like China that are building power plants at an incredibly fast rate, what should we be doing to ensure that America stays energy dominant and does not fall behind China in the nuclear race?

The United States should approach nuclear energy leadership as a strategic national objective. China is not pursuing nuclear energy solely as a source of electricity. It is using sustained reactor deployment, standardized designs, fuel-cycle investment, workforce development, and export promotion to strengthen its industrial base and expand its geopolitical influence. As of March 2026, 69 reactors are under construction worldwide, including 33 in China.¹

A credible U.S. response must therefore extend across the full nuclear enterprise. It begins with preserving and expanding the existing reactor fleet, which remains the foundation of U.S. nuclear generation, the core of the domestic operating workforce, and the industrial base from which future growth must proceed.

It also requires the United States to move advanced reactors from development into deployment. Progress in that area is now beginning to take shape. This month, TerraPower's Natrium project in Wyoming received an NRC construction permit, the first construction permit ever issued by the NRC for a commercial non-light-water power reactor.² That is an important step, but it must be followed by additional projects if the United States is to compete at the scale required.

Fuel security is equally important. The United States should rebuild domestic enrichment and fuel-cycle capacity, including HALEU production, so that advanced reactor deployment is not constrained by reliance on geopolitical competitors. DOE's January 2026 awards of \$2.7 billion to strengthen domestic enrichment services were important because they recognized that fuel capability is a national-security issue as well as an energy issue.³

The United States should also continue improving the policy and regulatory environment for deployment. The Administration's May 2025 executive actions appropriately treated nuclear energy as relevant to national security, supply-chain resilience, fuel availability, advanced reactor deployment, and the power needs associated with new industrial and computing demand.⁴ The

¹ International Atomic Energy Agency, Power Reactor Information System, "Under Construction Reactors by Region," last updated March 10, 2026; total reactors under construction worldwide: 69. See also PRIS country data for China.

² U.S. Department of Energy, "NRC Issues Construction Permit for TerraPower's Natrium Advanced Reactor," March 9, 2026. DOE states that this was the first construction permit ever issued by the NRC for a commercial non-light-water power reactor.

³ U.S. Department of Energy, "U.S. Department of Energy Awards \$2.7 Billion to Restore American Uranium Enrichment," January 5, 2026. DOE states that the awards total \$2.7 billion over ten years and are intended to strengthen domestic enrichment services and jumpstart HALEU supply chains.

⁴ The White House, "Reinvigorating the Nuclear Industrial Base," May 23, 2025. The order explicitly links nuclear energy to energy independence, artificial intelligence, uninterruptible power supplies for national security, fuel

central task now is implementation: efficient licensing, sustained appropriations, reliable demonstration pathways, and a durable investment climate that enables projects to move forward on commercial timelines.

Finally, the United States should compete internationally with the same seriousness that its major competitors bring to the field. Civil nuclear cooperation is not a one-time sale. It establishes long-term relationships in fuel supply, operations, services, workforce development, standards, and strategic alignment. Recent statements by senior U.S. officials in March 2026 reaffirming U.S. readiness to work with partner countries on civil nuclear deployment reflect an important recognition of this reality.⁵ To be effective, that effort should align diplomacy, trade and export policy, financing tools, fuel assurance, and industrial capability.

In my view, maintaining U.S. leadership will require a sustained strategy to build, fuel, license, finance, and export nuclear energy as part of a broader national effort to strengthen American industrial capacity and strategic influence.

- a. What do you think the consequences are if countries like China advance beyond the U.S. in new nuclear technology and development?

If China advances beyond the United States in new nuclear technology and deployment, the consequences would extend well beyond commercial competition. Nuclear energy leadership carries with it influence over supply chains, technical standards, financing relationships, regulatory approaches, and long-term strategic partnerships. Because nuclear projects create decades-long relationships in fuel supply, operations, maintenance, technical support, and workforce training, leadership in this sector translates directly into geopolitical influence.

That is particularly important in the context of standards. U.S. nuclear technology is associated with strong expectations in safety, security, safeguards, export controls, and operational transparency. If China becomes the preferred supplier across a larger share of the global market while sustaining the world's most active reactor construction program, the United States will have less influence over how the next generation of nuclear infrastructure is governed and less ability to reinforce high-standard approaches among partner countries.⁶

There are also significant domestic implications. A loss of leadership in nuclear energy would weaken parts of the U.S. industrial base that are important to energy resilience, advanced manufacturing, fuel-cycle capability, and high-skill employment. The recent focus on restoring domestic enrichment capability reflects a broader point: nuclear energy is not only a source of

availability, supply chains, and broader industrial and digital dominance.

⁵ Reuters, "US ready to work with other countries to develop civil nuclear power, official says," March 10, 2026. Reuters reported remarks in Paris by Under Secretary Thomas DiNanno that the United States is ready to work with other countries to develop civil nuclear power, including to meet demand from data centers.

⁶ International Atomic Energy Agency, Power Reactor Information System, "Under Construction Reactors by Region," last updated March 10, 2026; used here to support the point that China is sustaining the world's most active reactor construction program.

electricity. It is also a strategic industrial capability that supports national power.⁷

This issue is becoming more important as electricity demand grows in sectors that are directly relevant to national competitiveness and security. In 2025 and 2026, the federal government explicitly linked advanced nuclear energy to national security, uninterrupted power, and the broader competition for industrial and digital dominance.⁸ If another country leads in the technologies best positioned to serve those needs, the United States risks ceding strategic advantage in an area that should instead reinforce national self-reliance.

For these reasons, continued U.S. leadership in nuclear energy should be understood as a matter of national security. If China leads in new nuclear technology and deployment, it will gain influence over future energy systems, industrial systems, and strategic relationships in ways that may be difficult to reverse.

The Honorable Troy Balderson (R-OH)

1. We've seen several technology and data center companies make big bets on SMR technologies. These are companies with a history of investing in early-stage, innovative technologies that become commercialized and are widely used today. Why do you think these bets are being made on SMR technology today?
 - a. How important is it for us to accelerate both permitting and technology development of SMRs to win the AI race with China?

Accelerating both permitting and technology development of advanced nuclear is critical to maintaining U.S. leadership in strategic technologies, including artificial intelligence, where energy-intensive computing capabilities are central. Advanced nuclear provides a reliable, resilient, and scalable source of high-density power necessary for large AI data centers, supercomputing facilities, and future high-performance computing needs. Streamlining permitting processes and investing in technology demonstration reduces deployment timelines, enabling the U.S. to secure the domestic energy infrastructure required to support AI innovation at scale. Without rapid deployment, the United States risks falling behind in powering energy intensive AI applications, securing supply chains, and sustaining the grid needed for next generation technologies.

- b. Would the growth of SMRs as the next wave of carbon-free power technologies be possible without data center growth in the United States?

The growth of advanced nuclear is needed to support a wide range of applications from defense missions and critical national security operations, industrial power for oil and

⁷ U.S. Department of Energy, "U.S. Department of Energy Awards \$2.7 Billion to Restore American Uranium Enrichment," January 5, 2026. The award notice explicitly frames domestic fuel capacity as tied to energy security, reduced foreign reliance, and supply for both today's and tomorrow's reactors.

⁸ The White House, "Reinvigorating the Nuclear Industrial Base," May 23, 2025. The order expressly ties nuclear energy to national and economic security, artificial intelligence, energy independence, and uninterrupted power for national security.

gas and chemical manufacturing, and emergency response. This wide range of demand is evident in the nearly \$2 billion in private investment and more than 80 planned nuclear projects as of the end of 2025. However, the rapid expansion of high-performance computing and hyperscale AI data centers has created an unprecedented driver for large, reliable power sources, directly accelerating the needed scale and timelines for advanced nuclear. In this way, while advanced nuclear has intrinsic value across many sectors, the explosive growth of AI and other data-intensive applications acts as a catalyst that accelerates investment, licensing, and deployment of advanced nuclear technologies across the United States.

2. How should the US Department of Energy best allocate loan credit authority through the Office of Energy Dominance Financing to accelerate small modular reactor development?

DOE should allocate loan credit authority through the Office of Energy Dominance Financing in a way that preserves a viable financing pathway for all commercially ready small modular reactor and advanced reactor technologies. A durable EDF framework should be technology-neutral and focused on commercial readiness, licensing progress, creditworthiness, and the ability to deliver reliable, firm power to meet growing demand. That approach would allow DOE to support first-of-a-kind projects that are prepared to move toward deployment, while avoiding a financing structure that favors only repeat builds of a narrow set of designs. If the goal is to accelerate SMR development, EDF should give every commercially viable technology a fair opportunity to compete for financing on its merits.

3. Accelerating capacity in the near term is critical. While constructing new nuclear facilities is imperative, more needs to be done to improve the output of existing nuclear facilities. How can the United States Department of Energy and the Office of Energy Dominance Financing encourage investments that improve efficiencies from existing nuclear facilities through uprates to support meeting demand in the near term?

NEI supports the Department's efforts to use the Office of Energy Dominance Financing to help unlock near-term capacity gains from the existing nuclear fleet. Power uprates and related modernization investments can add reliable, around-the-clock generation faster than building new facilities alone. DOE has already made clear that EDF can support projects that "upgrade or uprate existing generation facilities," including "upgrading or uprating existing nuclear reactors," and the Department's recent closing of a \$26.5 billion loan package projected for Southern Company includes support for uprates and license renewals. Going forward, DOE can build on this by continuing to give uprates and efficiency-improving upgrades at operating nuclear plants clear priority within EDF, emphasizing projects that can deliver measurable additional megawatts on a near-term timeline and strengthen grid reliability for customers.

The Honorable Diana Harshbarger (R-TN)

1. As part of the NRC's rigorous license and permitting process for commercial reactors, the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) provides their own safety reviews and reports their findings to the NRC. Is it correct that ACRS is unnecessarily involved in some

licensing actions? How can Congress ensure the vital role of the ACRS is effectively focused on the most safety-significant or new technologies?

The Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) plays an important role in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's safety framework. Its independent technical expertise has historically provided valuable insight on complex safety issues and emerging technologies.

At the same time, there is growing recognition across industry and government that the current scope and scheduling of ACRS reviews can, in some cases, introduce inefficiencies and delays in the licensing process. Duplicative reviews of well-understood technologies or routine licensing actions can slow regulatory decisions without providing additional safety benefit. Those kinds of delays are increasingly difficult to sustain if the United States is to deploy new nuclear capacity at the pace required to meet growing electricity demand, strengthen grid reliability, and achieve energy security goals.

The NRC has acknowledged this challenge and has taken steps within its existing authority to streamline aspects of the ACRS review process and better prioritize its workload. These efforts are important and should continue.

However, Congress could further strengthen the effectiveness of the ACRS by clarifying its statutory role and focusing its efforts where its expertise provides the greatest value. Legislative direction to concentrate ACRS reviews on new, novel, or safety-significant technologies and issues, rather than routine or well-established licensing matters, would help ensure the committee remains a high-value contributor to nuclear safety while also improving the efficiency and predictability of the regulatory process.

Such an approach would preserve the independent safety function of the ACRS while allowing the NRC's licensing framework to operate more efficiently as the nation works to expand clean, reliable nuclear energy.

The Honorable Lural Lee (R-FL)

1. In your written testimony, you mentioned that nuclear energy is "uniquely valuable to national security." At this Committee, we strongly believe that energy security is national security.
 - a. Would you elaborate for us on why nuclear power is critical for our national security, and the qualities that make nuclear energy unique in this regard?

Nuclear energy is uniquely valuable to national security because it combines a set of attributes that are unusually difficult to replicate in a single energy source. It provides reliable around-the-clock generation, very high energy density, resilience, fuel security, and long-duration support for critical loads. Those qualities are important to the electric grid, but they are especially important where continuity of power is essential, including defense facilities, national-security infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, and major computing loads.

Its value, however, is not limited to reliability alone. Nuclear energy supports several

dimensions of national strength at the same time. It contributes to grid stability and resilience. It reduces vulnerability to fuel-supply disruptions. It supports domestic manufacturing, engineering, and skilled labor. It underpins an export sector with important strategic implications. It reinforces U.S. leadership in safety, security, and nonproliferation standards. And it sustains a broader nuclear ecosystem that is relevant to other national-security missions. Few energy technologies operate simultaneously at that intersection of energy security, industrial capability, technological leadership, and geopolitical influence.

The fuel-security dimension is especially important. Recent years have underscored the strategic risk of dependence on foreign fuel-cycle services, particularly with respect to Russia, while the next generation of advanced reactors will require reliable domestic access to HALEU and other fuel-cycle capabilities. That is why enrichment, conversion, fuel fabrication, and related supply-chain investments are now receiving greater attention.⁹ A robust nuclear sector is not simply a fleet of reactors. It is the industrial and technical infrastructure that supports those reactors over decades of operation.

Nuclear energy also has a distinct role in advancing U.S. interests abroad. Civil nuclear cooperation typically creates long-term partnerships rooted in trusted technology, shared standards, workforce relationships, fuel arrangements, and ongoing institutional engagement. In that respect, nuclear energy is not only part of domestic energy policy; it is also part of the United States' broader approach to alliance management, economic statecraft, and strategic competition.¹⁰

For all these reasons, I believe nuclear energy is uniquely valuable to national security. It contributes not only to reliable power generation, but also to the industrial, technological, and strategic foundations on which U.S. national strength depends.

- b. In my home state of Florida, we face a dual challenge: a rapidly growing population and the constant threat of extreme weather. Our existing nuclear plants have proven to be the backbone of our resilient grid. As we look to the future, how can advanced nuclear technologies—specifically SMRs and microreactors—provide Florida with the storm-hardened, clean, baseload power needed to support our state's growing economy and protect our residents?

Advanced nuclear technologies, including small modular reactors and microreactors, offer Florida a pathway to storm-hardened, reliable, and clean power that can support the state's rapidly growing economy and protect residents during extreme weather events. Nuclear reactors are designed for resilient operation under severe conditions, like hurricanes, and advanced reactors are being developed that can continue to operate even if off-site power is lost, enabling them to provide continuous power for critical infrastructure such as hospitals, emergency response centers, water treatment facilities, and data centers. Advanced reactor's modular and scalable designs allow deployment in coastal or distributed locations, reducing transmission vulnerabilities, and supporting local grids. By integrating these advanced reactors, Florida can strengthen energy security, maintain

⁹ U.S. Department of Energy, "U.S. Department of Energy Awards \$2.7 Billion to Restore American Uranium Enrichment," January 5, 2026.

¹⁰ Reuters, "US ready to work with other countries to develop civil nuclear power, official says," March 10, 2026.

reliable electricity during storms, and simultaneously advance clean energy goals, creating a stable foundation for economic growth while safeguarding communities against climate-driven power disruptions.

- c. What are some of the ways that nuclear facilities are protected against physical and cyber threats?

U.S. nuclear power plants operate under some of the most stringent security requirements of any critical infrastructure. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission sets security standards and regularly inspects plants to ensure compliance.

First, physical security relies on a defense-in-depth approach. Plants are protected by multiple layers of barriers and controlled access areas—from the outer exclusion zone to highly protected vital areas containing critical safety equipment. Facilities use advanced intrusion detection systems, constant surveillance, and strict access controls. If an alarm is triggered, trained security personnel immediately assess the situation. Nuclear plants also maintain highly trained, armed security forces on site capable of responding rapidly to any attempted intrusion or attack.

Second, cybersecurity protections are equally robust. Digital systems responsible for reactor safety, plant operations, and security are protected under strict NRC cybersecurity requirements. The most critical systems are isolated from external communications and not connected to the internet, significantly reducing vulnerability to cyberattacks.

Together, these layered physical and cyber protections—combined with federal oversight—ensure that U.S. nuclear facilities remain among the most secure energy facilities in the world.

2. In your testimony, you also mentioned the importance of maintaining a domestic nuclear fuel cycle and transitioning away from Russian fuel supplies. At the same time, you ask Congress “not to impose limits that could jeopardize the operational reliability of current and future plants or increase energy costs for consumers.” I agree we need to ensure reliability and avoid unnecessary costs on ratepayers. Congress has been hearing increasing concerns about the buildout of China enriched supplies that may be contracted into the United States market.
 - a. While such contracting may be relatively small, would you agree that reducing dependence on Russia while increasing dependence on China is not a positive development?

Russia has historically been one of the largest suppliers of nuclear fuel services worldwide, and replacing supply from a provider of that scale requires time. The U.S. nuclear industry is voluntarily moving away from Russian fuel, but as domestic and allied capacity is developed, utilities must maintain access to the global fuel market to ensure reliable reactor operations. That transition should not result in a new dependence on China. The industry’s objective is to avoid reliance on any single country and instead maintain a diversified fuel supply base that includes domestic production and trusted allied suppliers. Maintaining access to a broad and competitive global market is what ultimately reduces supply risk.

- b. With global demand for uranium projected to skyrocket in the future, is it important for the United States to expand domestic uranium production, from mining through enrichment, so we are not exposed to the same kinds of supply chain coercion from China, or other hostile nations?

Yes. Expanding domestic capabilities across the nuclear fuel cycle will strengthen U.S. energy security and reduce exposure to geopolitical supply risks. Nuclear fuel supply chains require long lead times and sustained investment, so rebuilding these capabilities will take time. A stronger domestic fuel base, complemented by supply from trusted allied nations, will help ensure the United States can reliably fuel the existing reactor fleet and support future nuclear deployments without undue reliance on geopolitical competitors.

- c. Is there anything else industry can do to ensure it does not get locked into a new level of supply chain dependency with China that undermines our policy to have a secure fuel supply?

Industry can continue taking steps to diversify fuel procurement and strengthen domestic and allied supply chains to avoid new dependencies on geopolitical competitors. Utilities are already working to broaden supply arrangements and long-term contracts with domestic and allied producers to help replace Russia as a major supplier. At the same time, fuel suppliers are taking steps to revitalize the front end of the U.S. fuel cycle, including restarting uranium mines, bringing domestic milling capacity back online, expanding conversion services, and increasing enrichment capacity. Together, these actions will help strengthen the resilience of the nuclear fuel supply chain and ensure the United States replaces reliance on geopolitical competitors with a more secure domestic and allied

supply base.

3. As you know, the explosion of AI and expansion of data centers are creating a massive, unprecedented surge in electricity demand. We are seeing tech companies and data center developers look toward nuclear energy to provide the 24/7 baseload power required for AI.
 - a. Does the current regulatory framework at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) allow for the speed and scale of deployment necessary to meet this localized demand, or are our outdated permitting processes threatening to hand the lead in the AI revolution to China?

The NRC's regulatory framework has ensured the safe use of nuclear energy for decades, and maintaining that strong safety culture remains essential. However, parts of the current licensing system were developed for different reactor technologies and can result in lengthy and resource-intensive processes. As electricity demand grows rapidly, particularly from AI and data centers, it will be important that the regulatory system be efficient and predictable so new nuclear capacity can be deployed when and where it is needed. Congress and the Administration have already taken meaningful steps to address this challenge.

- b. How will successful implementation of the ADVANCE Act change that?

The ADVANCE Act provides important direction to modernize the NRC's regulatory processes for advanced reactors. By improving the efficiency and predictability of licensing reviews and aligning the framework with new technologies, the law can help enable the timely deployment of advanced nuclear energy while maintaining the NRC's strong safety standards.

- c. Is there anything Congress can do to speed up the work of NRC and implementation of the ADVANCE Act?

Congress has already taken an important step through passage of the ADVANCE Act. Continued oversight and support for effective implementation, including ensuring the NRC has the resources needed to carry out these reforms and implement Executive Order 14300, will help strengthen the regulatory environment and support the deployment of advanced nuclear technologies needed to meet growing electricity demand.

The Honorable Diana DeGette (D-CO)

1. I appreciated your response to Rep. Fedorchak when she asked how Congress should follow up with the NRC to ensure that the ADVANCE Act was being appropriately implemented. I authored H.R. 4528 last Congress, which was the genesis of the staffing language included in section 502 of the ADVANCE Act. I completely agree that Congress should have more transparency into how the NRC is using the tools we granted to it in the ADVANCE Act.

- a. Can you detail the importance of the tools that Congress granted the NRC in attracting and retaining highly competent professional staff?

We appreciate your leadership in providing the NRC with additional staffing authorities through the ADVANCE Act. These tools are important in helping the agency attract and retain the highly skilled workforce needed to carry out its mission. Licensing and regulating nuclear technologies requires specialized expertise, and flexible hiring and compensation authorities can help the NRC compete for engineers, scientists, and other technical professionals. Ensuring the agency has access to this talent will be critical as it prepares to review a growing number of advanced reactor and related applications.

- b. Section 161B(f) of the Atomic Energy Act requires the NRC to include information in its annual budget request around hiring, vacancies, and compensation at the Commission, and to provide detailed information about how the NRC is using its staffing authorities under the ADVANCE Act. The NRC's Fiscal Year 2026 budget did not include such information. Should the NRC provide Congress, the industry, and the general public with this information on its staffing and compensation?

Congress plays an important oversight role in ensuring the NRC has the workforce and resources necessary to carry out its responsibilities. Transparency around staffing needs and workforce capabilities can help inform that oversight. Ultimately, decisions about the specific information provided in budget materials are matters for the Commission and Congress as they carry out their respective roles.

The Honorable Doris Matsui (D-CA)

1. During the hearing on January 7, you acknowledged that the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, as amended in 1987, does not meet the need for an effective comprehensive nuclear waste program. Can you please provide specific and detailed recommendations to this Committee for how the Nuclear Waste Policy Act should be amended to meet the nation's current and future needs regarding nuclear waste and used fuel?

The industry is seeking establishment of a durable, safe, environmentally sustainable, and well-run used fuel management and disposal system. NEI has developed a set of Policy Principles to communicate areas of priority and guide industry input and recommendations as we work to make the vision a reality. (<https://www.nei.org/resources/reports-briefs/policy-principles-for-used-nuclear-fuel>). Embedded in our Principles are actions, including amendments to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, needed to achieve the attributes of a high functioning used fuel management and disposal program. To broadly communicate the industry's Principles and associated recommendations, last October, NEI forwarded the attached letter to the Secretary of

Energy for his consideration as the Department developed its response to the used fuel provisions in Executive Order 14302, Reinventing the Nuclear Industrial Base.

The future success of this program requires Congressional support through appropriations but also through legislative changes to the current program, including some areas of wholesale change. Financial support is critical to the success of any path forward, and many of NEI's recommendations revolve around ensuring that the used fuel management program has access to appropriate funding.

- Congress should fund the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management to advance the used fuel management program in the near term. The Nuclear Waste Fund now holds approximately \$50 billion; a balance built through decades of contributions by the nuclear industry and its electricity customers. That balance grows by approximately \$1.7 billion from interest each year, and the total should be sufficient to support most—if not all—of the nation's disposal program without imposing additional fees on the industry or costs on its customers. However, it cannot be accessed under current funding restrictions.
- More broadly, legislation is needed to establish a framework that ensures reliable access to the Nuclear Waste Fund for its statutory purpose: the development, licensing, construction, and operation of permanent disposal capacity for used nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste.
- Congress should ensure that existing rights under the Standard Contract for disposal are preserved.

Additionally, continued support for a collaborative siting process for any long-term disposal facility and maintaining and supporting flexible interim storage solutions will move the country toward a sustainable solution to used fuel. With appropriate access to the funding already available in the Nuclear Waste Fund and continued engagement among the industry, the government, and communities, the solution is achievable. As Congress and the Administration continue to work to develop a sustainable used fuel management program, NEI remains ready to offer any additional support.