Opening Statement of Chairman Brian Babin

Energy Subcommittee Hearing
Powering Demand: Nuclear Solutions for AI Infrastructure
June 12, 2025

I want to thank our Energy Subcommittee Chairman and my good friend, Mr. Weber, for holding this timely hearing on powering data centers with advanced nuclear technologies.

Artificial intelligence is advancing at a breakneck pace. Every day, we see new groundbreaking developments and headlines that highlight AI's expanding role in our economy, national security, and daily lives.

Fortunately, the United States currently leads the world in the AI race—but that lead is not guaranteed. Both friends and foes are moving swiftly to close the gap.

At the core of AI innovation are data centers—the engines that drive this technological revolution.

These facilities require enormous and uninterrupted power. And when it comes to reliability, only one option consistently meets those high standards: nuclear.

Industry standards for top-tier data centers, especially those supporting AI workloads, require what's known as "five-9s" uptime or 99.999 percent operational reliability. This means that over the course of a year, the data center is expected to be operational 99.999 percent of the time. That equates to just 5.25 minutes of allowable downtime per year. Few energy sources can meet that bar. In fact, nuclear power, with its 92.5 percent capacity factor, stands alone in its ability to provide the clean, constant baseload power these systems demand. Plus, nuclear can provide much more energy per square foot than its competing energy sources, allowing nuclear to be sited nearer to customers and be less impactful on overall land use.

As this Administration has stated, nuclear energy will play a central role in our energy future.

Thanks to executive orders from President Trump and recent actions from the Department of Energy (DOE), we are beginning to cut through the red tape that has long stalled nuclear progress—moving quickly, but safely to scale nuclear power nationwide.

To get to this point, the federal government has spent over a decade significantly investing in advanced nuclear through the DOE's Office of Nuclear Energy. These early-stage investments were essential to getting first-of-a-kind technologies off the ground. However, in today's budget-constrained environment, that support must be seen as a launchpad—not a permanent lifeline. It's time for the private sector to step up.

Fortunately, the market is ready. The nuclear renaissance we anticipated in the early 2000s is now within reach. As the demand for power increases, new nuclear companies have a critical partner in large technology firms that are willing to invest in and help deploy the fleet of nuclear reactors that has long been promised.

However, these tech companies are not only willing to pay a premium to bring these new, first-of-a-kind power sources online, but they have also shown an appetite for current technology.

Earlier this year, Microsoft and Constellation Energy—one of our witnesses today—announced plans to reactivate the Crane Clean Energy Center, marking a historic moment. Additionally, just last week, Meta and Constellation announced a 20-year agreement to keep the plant operational.

This isn't just good energy policy—it's good economic policy, creating well-paying jobs and generating millions in tax revenue that would otherwise be lost.

This momentum is spreading. Across the country—including my home state of Texas—lawmakers are advancing pro-nuclear policies. Universities are also seeing the benefits of partnering with advanced nuclear. Texas A&M, through its RELLIS campus, announced the creation of "The Energy Proving Ground" project. This project will involve Texas A&M assisting four chosen SMR companies with permitting and providing a location to demonstrate their reactors.

Now is the time for the nuclear industry to take its next step toward unlocking its full potential. The conditions are ripe for resounding success.

We are fortunate to have a strong panel of witnesses with us today who bring deep expertise from across the advanced nuclear energy and artificial intelligence sectors.

I want to thank each of you for joining us today, and I look forward to your testimony. With that, I yield back.