



Opening Statement of Chairman Brian Babin

Energy Subcommittee Hearing

Powering the Nuclear Renaissance: Accelerating U.S. Leadership in Advanced Nuclear Reactors

Wednesday, September 2, 2026

Thank you, Chairman Weber.

Today's hearing will examine the future of nuclear energy and how the United States can maintain global leadership in advanced nuclear reactor technologies.

Nuclear energy is one of America's most reliable sources of baseload power. The U.S. Navy has relied on nuclear propulsion for decades, while expanded commercial maritime applications have remained limited.

Nuclear power has also enabled NASA to explore the farthest reaches of our solar system and beyond, fueling missions such as New Horizons, the first probe to perform a flyby of Pluto, and the Voyager missions which are now beyond the solar system.

Advanced nuclear technologies are unlocking new possibilities, from modernizing maritime propulsion and the global commercial fleet to powering Lunar outposts and future missions to Mars and beyond. Commercial nuclear companies are exploring new applications of nuclear energy in space, including space mining, orbital transportation, and fusion propulsion.

These innovations are also delivering benefits here on Earth, including improved molecular imaging technologies for more targeted medical diagnostics and radionuclide therapies that are helping treat cancer. The U.S. military, through its Janus Program, is exploring advanced reactors to power installations independently of the civilian grid. This would provide U.S. forces overseas with greater energy security while reducing reliance on vulnerable fuel supply lines, with the goal of achieving these capabilities by 2028.

None of these advances would be possible without strong public-private partnerships. The federal research enterprise plays a key role in supporting early-stage research, reducing barriers to deployment, and establishing the conditions for industry to develop and commercialize advanced nuclear technologies. America's robust private sector is essential to turning nuclear innovation into reality. Companies like those represented here today are bringing new ideas, technologies, and investments to market, creating a pipeline of innovation that will strengthen America's energy, economic, and national security.

We cannot afford to lose this momentum or cede leadership to our international competitors. The People's Republic of China (PRC) and Russia are aggressively investing in advanced nuclear

technologies, fuel supply chains, and manufacturing capabilities, seeking to shape the next generation of global energy and technology markets. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, uncertainty surrounding U.S. access to critical medical isotopes exposed vulnerabilities in our nuclear supply chains. The United States must strengthen our domestic capabilities and ensure that we lead in advanced nuclear technologies. As with so many other technologies we have discussed before this Committee, the nation that leads in nuclear innovation will help set the standards and shape the global nuclear industry for decades to come.

To maintain this leadership, the United States must work closely with like-minded countries to develop these vital capabilities in a safe and responsible manner. Through workforce development and strategic civil nuclear cooperation, U.S. companies can gain access to emerging energy markets while our international partners can unlock vast amounts of reliable baseload power.

This Committee has an important role to play in ensuring American innovations lead the way. While it is important to have thoughtful regulatory frameworks in place, we must also foster an economic environment that allows technological breakthroughs to thrive. I am eager to learn from our witnesses how we can help make that happen.

In closing, I want to echo Chairman Weber's comments about the truly historic moment this sector is experiencing, made possible by the bold and aggressive vision of the current Administration and its recognition of the potential advanced nuclear reactors hold for our nation in the coming years.

I want to thank our witnesses for their testimony today, and I look forward to a productive discussion.

Thank you, Chairman Weber. I yield back the balance of my time.