

MARIA KORSNICK

President and Chief Executive Officer

1201 F Street NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20004
P: 202.739.8187
mgk@nei.org
nei.org



July 11, 2018

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Pallone:

On behalf of the commercial nuclear energy industry, the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI¹) expresses its support for the Nuclear Utilization of Keynote Energy Act (H.R. 1320, the NUKE Act), Advanced Nuclear Fuel Availability Act (H.R. 6140), and the Advancing U.S. Civil Nuclear Competitiveness and Jobs Act.

These bills appropriately recognize the important role nuclear energy plays in providing reliable, carbon-free electricity here at home and around the world. NEI and its members appreciate Congress's action to ensure that nuclear energy continues to be a significant contributor to our nation's standard of living, national security, economic growth, and influence in the international arena.

The bipartisan NUKE Act takes well-justified and timely steps to reform the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's funding structure. Although we are encouraged by and supportive of the NRC's recent efforts to reduce its budget as part of Project Aim, licensee fees continue to be excessive and do not reflect the agency's decreased workload. Because licensees are responsible for funding 90 percent of the agency's budget, licensees are obligated to pay even more in fees when reactors and fuel cycle facilities close prematurely.

These problems are exacerbated by a lack of transparency and predictability in the fee assessment process. NRC's schedules for completing licensing reviews are rarely made available, making it difficult if not impossible for licensees to anticipate overall costs, or determine whether reviews are being conducted timely or effectively. NRC invoices also typically lack detail, which limits licensees' ability to question charges invoiced for undefined project management activities. NEI strongly supports these

¹ The Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) is responsible for establishing unified policy on behalf of its members relating to matters affecting the nuclear energy industry, including the regulatory aspects of generic operational and technical issues. NEI's members include entities licensed to operate commercial nuclear power plants in the United States, nuclear plant designers, major architect and engineering firms, fuel cycle facilities, nuclear materials licensees, and other organizations involved in the nuclear energy industry.

Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Pallone

July 11, 2018

Page 2

sound public policy approaches within the NUKE Act, which seeks to reform the Commission's outdated fee structure, ensure transparency in the billing process and streamline license reviews so that we can successfully build the reactors of the future.

Powered by American innovation and ingenuity, development of the next generation of advanced nuclear reactors is underway. Many of these advanced reactors will require High-Assay Low Enriched Uranium (HALEU), which is uranium enriched between 5% and 20%. Currently, commercial nuclear fuel suppliers, with the possible exception of Russia, can only produce uranium enriched to 5%. The bipartisan Advanced Nuclear Fuel Availability Act (H.R. 6140) appropriately directs the Secretary of Energy to establish a program to make HALEU available for domestic commercial use. Having access to HALEU is essential for American companies to successfully develop the next generation of nuclear reactors, and NEI strongly supports this legislation.

Around the world, there are 56 nuclear reactors under construction, and more than half of those are being built by either the Russians or the Chinese. Over six decades ago, the United States developed nuclear power, established international nonproliferation and safety standards and earned its place as the world's leader in the technology. The Advancing U.S. Civil Nuclear Competitiveness and Jobs Act would help ensure that American companies have the tools they need to compete fairly in nuclear tenders throughout the world. As an emphasis continues to be placed on clean energy, countries around the globe are pursuing nuclear power for the carbon-free reliable electricity it produces. This bill helps to ensure American companies are at the table with our foreign competitors so that we can continue to provide our technology and, in doing so, set international nonproliferation, security and safety standards for years to come.

On behalf of NEI and its members, I thank the Committee for supporting these bills, which collectively support the United States nuclear industry. Their passage will provide environmental and economic benefits to all Americans by helping to retain the generation source responsible for 20 percent of the electricity and well over half of the nation's carbon-free electricity. Finally, they will assist in establishing necessary conditions for development and deployment of American advanced nuclear reactor technologies here and abroad. NEI supports the passage of these bills and urges swift consideration of the measures on the House floor.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maria Korsnick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Maria Korsnick