



NIC NEWS

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USNIC Lauds Long-Warranted Senate Legislation To Reform and Modernize NRC Licensing

Washington DC – In a letter to Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works leadership today, the U.S. Nuclear Infrastructure Council applauded bipartisan support for advanced nuclear energy progress and development advanced by the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (S. 512).

The legislation was introduced by Senators John Barrasso (R-WY), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), James Inhofe (R-OK), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Mike Crapo (R-ID), Deb Fischer (R-NE), Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) and Joe Manchin (D-WV) on March 2nd, 2017. The letter was sent on behalf of the Council by former NRC Commissioner Jeffrey Merrifield (1998-2007) who chairs the Council's Advanced Reactors Task Force. The USNIC is the leading American business consortium advocate for nuclear energy and the promotion of the U.S. supply chain globally.

“We believe that trailblazing the advance of nuclear energy technology including Gen 3+, Small Modular Reactors, Non-Light Water Reactor Advanced Reactors and Fusion Reactors is one of the key imperatives for U.S. market competitiveness and is pivotal to maintaining the U.S. lead in technology innovation, jobs, exports, energy independence and Made-in-America clean energy leadership,” said Merrifield.

“As a consortium representing 14 leading nuclear energy developers pioneering next-generation nuclear energy technology, we welcome the legislation's focus on modernization of the NRC's regulatory framework to provide the regulatory clarity and predictability for advanced reactor license applicants. We strongly support provisions to reduce up-front regulatory costs through the development of a cost-share program to nurture vital pre-licensing engagement and measures incentivizing the NRC to develop a modern, technology neutral framework that allows for the phased and expedited licensing of advanced reactor technologies,” he said.

Merrifield added: “We commend the focus of S. 512 on reforms addressing structural issues with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) budget and fee recovery authorities to promote long-warranted transparency and accountability. We also embrace the directive to establish performance benchmarks and reporting to Congress to improve transparency and surety in the decision-making timelines by the NRC.”

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“It is our hope that as the Committee moves toward mark-up it will look at strengthening the pre-licensing engagement where enhancing the development of phased licensing objectives by incorporating a requirement for an upfront vendor design review modeled after the Canadian nuclear regulatory authority’s process allowing pre-licensing regulatory feedback on the designs in a defined period of time and under a defined cost... We also wish to echo the need for consideration of a High Assay LEU (HLEU) amendment advocated by ClearPath to establish a HLEU reserve for advanced reactor... the Council is fully supportive of the NRC’s current FY2017 request for \$5 million in off-the-fee-base funding to support the development of NRC licensing capabilities for advanced reactors,” Merrifield said.

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The views above represent a consensus of the U.S. Nuclear Infrastructure Council, but do not necessarily represent the specific views of individual member companies and organizations.

About USNIC

The United States Nuclear Infrastructure Council (USNIC) is the leading U.S. business consortium advocate for nuclear energy and promotion of the American supply chain globally. Composed of nearly 90 companies, USNIC represents the "Who's Who" of the nuclear supply chain community, including key utility movers, technology developers, construction engineers, manufacturers and service providers. USNIC encompasses seven working groups and select task forces. For more information visit www.usnic.org.