

Testimony of Theodore Garrish

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Subcommittee Chairman Latta, Subcommittee Ranking Member Castor, Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, and Members of the Subcommittee on Energy. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before today's hearing, *Nuclear Spent Fuel Policy: Examining Nuclear Lifecycle Innovation Campuses*. It has been an honor to work with Members on this Committee in a bi-partisan manner over the years and I look forward to our continued work.

The Next Golden Age of Nuclear Energy

Just over a year ago, a resurgence in our country's nuclear industry seemed unlikely. For years, progress was stymied by bureaucracy and antiquated regulations that failed to keep pace with nuclear innovation and research. Projects stalled, permits piled up, and our domestic supply chains weakened. Nuclear energy, a cornerstone of the United States' energy portfolio, was labeled as too expensive and too slow to keep pace with growing energy needs.

Then, in May 2025, President Trump released four bold executive orders outlining America's next nuclear Golden Age. The President set ambitious goals and deadlines: quadrupling nuclear power from 100 gigawatts to 400 gigawatts by 2050, 10 reactors with complete designs under construction by 2030, rebuilding the domestic nuclear fuel supply chain, and achieving criticality for at least three advanced reactors by July 4, 2026.

Over the last 16 months, the United States (U.S.) Department of Energy (DOE) and its laboratories, collaborating with interagency partners and industry, have made history and demonstrated that with the right enabling environment, America's nuclear energy industry can flourish.

DOE successfully accelerated the timeline of advanced reactor development without compromising safety. Through the Reactor Pilot Program and Nuclear Energy Launch Pad, DOE authorized advanced reactors for four companies, Antares Nuclear, Valar Atomic, Deployable Energy, and Aalo Atomic, all of which achieved criticality by the President's July 4, 2026 goal. With DOE oversight and technical support, these companies have transformed the U.S. nuclear industry's expectations on the timeline for the development and deployment of advanced reactors. DOE is building off the success of the pilot programs with Nuclear Energy Launch Pad, which recently announced 13 additional projects.

As reactor developers unlock the potential of advanced nuclear technologies, the country continues to need more energy, which is why the United States is expanding America's nuclear fleet and its capacity. In June, the Office of Energy Dominance Financing (EDF) issued a conditional loan of \$17.5 billion to help finance long-lead items for up to 10 AP1000 nuclear reactors. Thanks to EDF's derisking of the supply chain, I expect this order book to materialize. In March, DOE unveiled Utility Power Reactor Incremental Scaling Effort, a new initiative to put more energy on the grid through uprates and restarts. In addition, EDF is supporting the restart of Crane in Pennsylvania, Duane Arnold in Iowa, and Palisades in Michigan while financing uprates for the existing fleet.

DOE is also rebuilding the domestic enrichment supply chain. Thanks to this Committee's bipartisan work on the Nuclear Fuel Security Act, the Department is on track to fill the 3 million separative work units gap left by the removal of enriched uranium from Russia with the Russian uranium importation ban taking full effect on January 1, 2028. To date, we have signed three \$900 million milestone-based contracts totaling \$2.7B to spur domestic uranium enrichment toward satisfying the needs of the current fleet and the next generation of reactors, including the Army's Janus Program which serves as the Executive Agent for the Department of War. Rebuilding this domestic capacity ensures our military forces are not forced to rely on foreign adversaries for the fuel needed to execute critical defense missions. Together, these actions demonstrate that a government-enabled, industry-led approach to nuclear is vital to its success and future development.

Nuclear Lifecycle Innovation Campuses

Building off these accomplishments, DOE is embarking on a path to transform the domestic nuclear fuel cycle with the establishment of Nuclear Lifecycle Innovation Campuses. An outgrowth of the four executive orders, this voluntary federal-state partnership is designed to enhance economic growth, revitalize the American heartland, and establish a coherent end-to-end nuclear energy strategy.

To maximize the total value of the nuclear material across the nuclear lifecycle, a campus may host the full nuclear supply chain including conversion, enrichment, deconversion, fuel fabrication, recycling, storage, and disposition. In practice, this lifecycle begins with the relocation of irradiated material from sites across the country to a campus where it can be safely stored, recycled, and disposed.

Once onsite, the used nuclear fuel will be recycled, recovering valuable materials including uranium and medical isotopes. As only a fraction of the potential energy contained in nuclear fuel is consumed by its first use in a reactor core, recycling offers an opportunity to capture its maximal value that would otherwise be disposed. Recovered material would then become feedstock for fuel fabrication at the campus establishing a full nuclear fuel cycle.

The Department's mission is not simply managing the Nation's nuclear waste but instead maximizing its beneficial use and minimizing its volume. Through the integration of recycling, storage, and disposal, DOE can create new, durable pathways for disposal that are safe, secure, and fiscally responsible. This approach supports the longstanding strategy of turning a federal liability into a strategic asset.

Under this new model, the campuses will attract significant investment, expand domestic manufacturing, and create thousands of new high-paying jobs in their respective regions. Establishment of an Innovation Campus could attract up to \$50 billion in capital investment, generate as much as \$10 billion in state and local tax revenue, and create nearly 22,000 jobs at full scale. I believe an Innovation Campus can help turn a state into a regional industrial powerhouse capable of providing high paying jobs, improved infrastructure, and lower energy prices.

With this vision in mind, this past January, DOE issued a Request for Information (RFI) inviting states to show their interest in hosting an Innovation Campus. In April, the Department received 28 responses from 26 states. The overwhelming positive response showed that states shared our vision of a fully integrated nuclear supply chain and understood how it could bring opportunity, jobs, and affordable energy to their communities, and wanted to be part of it.

Following the RFI, the Department engaged directly with individual states to discuss their vision for an Innovation Campus. After robust discussions, the Department entered into Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with Utah, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Idaho, and West Virginia formalizing our relationship and further reinforcing a state's commitment to exploring establishment of a campus in their state. These MOUs serve as the first step toward a larger shared goal of a host agreement.

A New Era for America's Nuclear Fuel Cycle Starts Now

Despite these positive developments, Innovation Campuses cannot come fully to fruition without congressional action. Currently, the law only authorizes one state as a solution to the back end of the fuel cycle, thus limiting our ability to implement Innovation Campuses in a broader context.

Momentum is building and six states are currently on a path toward signing host agreements, demonstrating meaningful interest in the innovation campus model. DOE looks forward to working with Congress to enable broad participation in nuclear energy's future.

For the first time in decades, the federal government, states and the nuclear industry have a clear path to modernizing the country's full nuclear fuel cycle and help position the United States as a global leader in nuclear energy. The time is now to seize this opportunity to fully unleash the nuclear renaissance.

I look forward to working in partnership with members on this Committee and Congress to develop the Nuclear Lifecycle Innovation Campus program. Together we can deliver a prosperous, secure, and affordable future. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Committee and I look forward to your questions.