



United States Nuclear Infrastructure Council
1317 F Street NW, Suite 350 Washington, DC 20004

May 11, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space & Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Infrastructure Council, I am writing to express the Council's support for Subtitle C -- Nuclear Energy Research and Development of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2015 (H.R. 1806).

As the leading business consortium focused on new nuclear energy and involvement of the U.S. nuclear supply chain globally (www.usnic.org), we strongly advocate U.S. nuclear energy technology advancement as one of the key building blocks for continued competitiveness and, indeed, energy and national security and environmental progress. In particular, we support a comprehensive nuclear energy technology advancement program -- including Gen 3+ reactors, Small Modular Reactors and advanced reactors -- that pivots off of a sound public-private partnership framework.

To this end, we applaud the Committee's continued focus on nuclear energy as a critical component of energy and national security including H.R. 1158 to provide enhanced flexibility for National Laboratory partnerships with the private sector for the development of advanced nuclear energy technologies; the Committee's "Future of Nuclear Energy" hearing in December 2014; and this week's hearing on nuclear energy innovation and the National Laboratories.

Similarly, we welcome the focus of the America COMPETES Act in keeping the U.S. competitive and reinvigorating the federal government's primary scientific role to fund basic research and its specific provisions to:

- Enhance nuclear energy visibility as part of the U.S. energy portfolio;

- Support technological advances in areas that industry by itself is not likely to undertake because of technical and financial uncertainty;
- Maintain a core competency with respect to nuclear scientists and engineers;
- Maintain key infrastructure for National Laboratory and university nuclear energy programs;
- Reaffirm support for the Small Modular Reactors program including promoting development, demonstration and commercial applications;
- Pioneering new approaches in advanced nuclear energy technology development;
- Developing, planning, constructing, acquiring and operating special equipment and facilities including fast test reactor prototypes and an advanced reactor innovation test bed to address advanced reactor design challenges;
- Supporting technology transfer; and
- Seeking to maximize the fuel cycle to reduce used nuclear fuel volumes and nuclear waste products

Given this, we are pleased to see the favorable outcome of the full Committee markup on America COMPETES and the joint announcement with U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation Chairman John Thune (R-SD) to maximize federal research dollars and support a collaborative effort to move reauthorization legislation through the Congress.

We look forward to continuing to work cooperatively with the Committee under your leadership to allow enhanced private-sector cooperation and commercialization to advance nuclear energy technologies. Please be advised that, while these views represent the consensus views of the Council, they do not necessarily reflect the specific views of individual member companies or organizations.

Sincerely,

David Blee

David Blee
Executive Director

Copy to: The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson. Ranking Member