

DECARBONIZING OUR ECONOMY:

Nuclear Energy Climate Policy Priorities

Nuclear power reactors are the ideal carbon-free, 24/7/365 partner to wind turbines, solar panels and energy storage in meeting the President's goal to decarbonize our electricity system by 2035.



The Biden-Harris administration has made the transition to a carbon-free electricity system a high priority. Legislation to incentivize the deployment of new, clean technologies must also value the carbon-free generation from America's operating nuclear plants. Administration proposals to address our infrastructure should include provisions to preserve the well-paying, often rural, jobs at nuclear power plants potentially facing early closure. The 94 nuclear power reactors operating across the country produce about 20 percent of U.S. electricity. These reactors are the largest source of carbon-free electricity in the U.S. by far. These reactors produce power around the clock, for up to 24 months between refuelings. This makes nuclear power reactors the ideal carbon-free, 24/7/365 partner to wind turbines, solar panels and energy storage in meeting the administration's goal to decarbonize our electricity system by 2035.

1. Ensure Continued Operation of Existing Reactors

The most cost-effective step that can be taken in achieving carbon goals is to preserve these carbon-free energy workhorses. Urgent action is needed to prevent unnecessary closures.

- **Legislation**

The Biden-Harris administration should work with Congress to develop incentives for companies that continue to safely operate and maintain nuclear plants—particularly those plants that are at risk of premature closure due to economic stresses—until enactment of a federal clean energy standard or other policy that fully values nuclear energy for its carbon-free attribute.

- **Electric Market Reform**

FERC should ensure that states maintain autonomy to create clean energy incentive programs. The President should nominate FERC Commissioners committed to respecting state clean electricity policies by integrating them along with regional carbon pricing proposals into organized market rules.

- **National Priority**

The Biden-Harris administration should issue a Statement of Administration Position on the importance of retaining nuclear power plants in conjunction with its announcement of the U.S.'s updated nationally determined contribution.

2. Accelerate Demonstration and Commercialization of New Technologies

New nuclear generation will be needed to achieve meaningful carbon reductions in the electric, transportation and industrial energy sectors.

- **DOE-NE Budget**

In keeping with the Biden-Harris administration's plan to significantly increase clean energy technology investments, the budget request for DOE-NE must increase from about \$2 billion in fiscal 2022 to about \$3 billion in fiscal 2026. This will enable completion of the Advanced Reactor Demonstration Projects that will help ensure America's innovators are able to deliver world-leading technologies to market.

- **Legislation**

To ensure deployment extends beyond initial demonstrations, the Biden-Harris administration should work with Congress to enact market-stimulating policies for the full range of carbon-free energy resources; such policies have proven effective for wind and solar energy and should be used to incentivize the full range of clean energy sources.

- **Fossil Fuel Replacements**

Consistent with the Biden-Harris administration's plans for Empowering Workers Through Revitalizing Energy Communities, the administration should work with Congress to establish a special incentive for advanced reactor construction in coal communities and other areas impacted by the transition from fossil fuel.

3. Embrace Nuclear Energy as Clean Energy to Promote Increased Nuclear Exports

As the world pursues clean and sustainable energy, it is critical that nuclear energy have access to the same resources as other clean energy technologies by working to ensure that nuclear energy is included in the development of international and multi-national standards for clean energy development.

- **Enhance Export Financing**

Financing is critical to U.S. nuclear competitiveness abroad. The Biden-Harris administration should continue to employ the Export-Import Bank, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency as key enablers of U.S. nuclear energy exports and work to modify policies and expand the support available through these agencies to enhance competitiveness;

4. Bold Action to Fulfill the Government's Responsibility on Nuclear Waste

This long-standing impasse must be resolved if nuclear energy is to achieve its full potential as part of an increasingly clean U.S. energy system. We stand ready to work with Congress and the Biden-Harris administration to get the nuclear waste program back on track.

- **Administration Action**

While Congress considers the future of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, the Biden-Harris administration should take steps to stand up an organization to resume management of the nuclear waste program and implement an integrated nuclear waste management system that allows for private consolidated interim spent fuel storage approaches.