

Idaho State UNIVERSITY

Office for Research
921 South 8th Avenue, Stop 8130 • Pocatello, Idaho 83209-8130

March 14, 2017

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman
Senate Committee of Environment and Public Works
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso:

I am writing to you today in regard to a letter of support for the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (NEIMA).

There is significant sustained interest among the private, governmental and academic sectors in the potential for advanced nuclear reactors to mitigate the negative effects of mature nuclear plant closures and the related aging power plant infrastructure. The State of Idaho, Idaho State University (ISU) and the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) play a large part in the development of solutions to these problems now and in the near future. In particular, the high probability that universities and national laboratories will contribute significantly to the design and analysis of new reactor system configurations for producing the electricity to meet public needs is being realized. Related activities, including modeling and simulation of new systems, are coupled with the potential for building new commercial plants in the western United States.

ISU is highly supportive of new legislation including NEIMA that will allow the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to streamline the process that will enable innovation to proceed in the design and licensing of new advanced nuclear reactors, first as pilot projects and then as commercial systems with proven safety and reliability. ISU provides undergraduate and graduate education in Nuclear Science and Engineering in both Idaho Falls and Pocatello, Idaho. The nuclear-related research at ISU is coordinated with and supportive of the research at the INL, and many of our graduates are employed by the related industries and governmental activities throughout the nation. We contribute directly to the development of a new workforce to replace the graying engineers, regulators, managers and operators in the current plants and regulatory agencies.

While the usual role of a university like ISU is primarily undergraduate and graduate education with the related research, design and development, there is considerable activity in adding public-private partnerships in research with the objective of rapid commercialization of designs and processes that will increase the probability that new plants will be built that meet the needs of the public and satisfy the necessary regulatory requirements. In a real sense, having universities, national laboratories and the private sector working together on the entire process from conception to construction and operation will shorten the time to effectively implement new advanced reactors in the national interest. The NEIMA should aid this process by shortening the time to license and implement the best new designs and significantly reduce the unnecessary costs of delays and missed opportunities.

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Idaho State University is committed to do its part to support the nuclear renaissance in a safe and effective environment and to assist in providing both workers and technology for the modernization of U. S. nuclear power production. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the NEIMA and related impending legislation.

Sincerely,



Dr. Cornelis J. Van der Schyf
Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School
Idaho State University

Cc: Senator Carper
Senator Inhofe
Senator Whitehouse
Senator Crapo
Senator Booker
Senator Fischer
Senator Capito
Senator Manchin