

June 16, 2021

The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin
509 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Pascrell
2409 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Sen. Cardin and Rep. Pascrell,

Thank you for your leadership on identifying solutions that will help the country realize a new clean energy economy and its numerous benefits.

Federal action is urgently needed to preserve nuclear energy, the country's largest source of carbon-free electricity¹ because energy markets and state and federal policies currently do not properly value nuclear's carbon-free power. As a result, "over the past two decades, the United States' total number of nuclear plants has fallen from 104 to 94. Expected closures are increasing, with approximately 5.1 gigawatts of nuclear capacity anticipated to go offline in 2021."²

As Congress considers a historic investment in our nation's infrastructure, the preservation of the country's nuclear fleet should not be overlooked. It presents an opportunity to help aggressively combat the growing climate crisis, rebuild our economy with good-paying jobs, and address long-standing public health inequities.

That is why we are urging you to support the establishment of a nuclear Production Tax Credit (PTC) for existing nuclear energy plants, similar to the tax credits currently helping to drive wind and solar deployment. A nuclear PTC is a near-term, achievable tool that can work in tandem with other policies to preserve the nation's clean electricity foundation – nuclear energy – to realize critical climate, public health, and economic goals. In addition, it's imperative that the PTC is enacted with labor standards, as called for in President Biden's American Jobs Plan and the FY22 budget.

Simply put, safe, reliable, carbon-free, and emissions-free nuclear energy is:

- **Integral for achieving the Biden Administration's goal of 100% clean electricity by 2035.** According to a March 2021 Rhodium Report³, under current policy more than half of the U.S. nuclear fleet will retire by 2030 – requiring that much more carbon-free electricity just to maintain the status quo, versus moving toward that goal. In fact, the report found that "without a nuclear retention incentive, electric power sector emissions would be 23-38% higher, up to 188 million metric tons in 2031."
- **The backbone of clean energy and high-paying union jobs in America.** During a January 2021 speech, President Biden said that "A key plank of our Build Back Better Recovery Plan is building a modern, resilient climate infrastructure and clean energy future that will create millions of good-paying union jobs — not 7, 8, 10, 12 dollars an hour, but prevailing wage and benefits."⁴ America's nuclear energy industry is uniquely poised to support this goal. It provides more than half of the clean energy jobs in America by directly employing nearly 100,000 people and indirectly employing

¹ <https://www.nei.org/fundamentals/nuclear-provides-carbon-free-energy>

² <https://www.energy.senate.gov/2021/4/manchin-urges-biden-to-support-domestic-nuclear-fleet-prevent-plant-closures>

³ <https://rhg.com/research/build-back-better-clean-electricity/>

⁴ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/01/27/remarks-by-president-biden-before-signing-executive-actions-on-tackling-climate-change-creating-jobs-and-restoring-scientific-integrity/>

another 375,000 people.⁵ In addition, the industry deploys highly skilled union workers to be on the frontlines of climate change. Over 14,000 IBEW members are permanently employed at nuclear facilities around the country, with thousands more who do construction work during nuclear facilities' refueling outages that occur every 18-24 months⁶ per reactor with jobs that are earning on average 36 percent higher than the local prevailing salary rate.

- **Important for keeping electricity prices low for hardworking families across the country whose pocketbooks continue to be stretched thin by COVID-19.** Study after study shows that without nuclear generation, electricity bills would be higher. In fact, retail rates would be about 6 percent higher on average.⁷

We urge Congress to enact a nuclear PTC this year. Doing so will help realize President Biden's goal of supporting the country continuing to overcome the pandemic and meet the challenges of rebuilding America's middle class while combating the climate crisis. With thoughtful consideration and the relevant stakeholders at the table, we can successfully transition to a carbon-free electricity sector. This will dramatically reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality for all communities, preserve and create thousands of family-sustaining jobs, and protect consumers' pocketbooks.

Sincerely,



⁵ <http://www.nuclearmatters.com/report-11>

⁶ <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/IF/IF18/20200916/111008/HHRG-116-IF18-Wstate-StephensonL-20200916.pdf>

⁷ https://d3n8a8pro7vnm.cloudfront.net/nuclearmatters/pages/204/attachments/original/1494335354/July-Nuclear-Matters-Report_Value-of-Nuclear.pdf?1494335354