

April 15, 2016

Chairman Jim Inhofe
205 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Ranking Member Barbara Boxer
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Inhofe and Ranking Member Boxer:

I am writing to voice strong support for the recently-introduced legislation, S. 2795, the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act. Third Way agrees with leading climate authorities that nuclear energy can play a major role in meeting global targets for emissions reduction. To support this reliable source of zero-carbon electricity, U.S. policy must encourage continued production from our existing nuclear fleet while also providing a viable path to commercialization for advanced nuclear technologies with enhanced performance, safety, and economic characteristics. The current structure of certain processes at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), however, may actually act as a deterrent to safe and economical operation and advancement of nuclear technology.

This bill addresses the NRC modernization needs of both the emerging advanced nuclear sector and the current nuclear reactors that provide the largest share of our carbon-free electricity. While innovation in the private sector has grown rapidly over the past several years, regulatory uncertainty at the NRC is hampering long-term investment. The current licensing process was developed for a previous generation of technology and is ill-equipped for advanced reactors. This bipartisan bill would require the NRC to provide a pathway for advanced reactor licensing that would better guarantee their safety and encourage continued investment in innovation. It would also provide much-needed transparency and fee reform to address concerns about increasing regulatory costs for our existing nuclear fleet.

We applaud the introduction of S. 2795 and hope that your Committee quickly approves it. The United States government plays a vital role in the future of the advanced nuclear sector and this bill establishes the regulatory certainty the industry needs to succeed. We look forward to continuing to support it as it moves through the House and Senate.

Sincerely,



Josh Freed
Vice President for the Clean Energy Program
Third Way

cc:

Senator Mike Crapo
Senator Sheldon Whitehouse
Senator Cory Booker