United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 20, 2020

The Honorable Jeffrey I. Kessler
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Enforcement and Compliance
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Assistant Secretary Kessler:

We support the Department of Commerce's (DOC) efforts to extend the Russian Suspension Agreement (RSA), as recommended by the Nuclear Fuel Working Group (NFWG). This will protect our nation's nuclear fuel supply chain from aggressive and illegal trade practices of nuclear state-owned enterprises of foreign adversaries. Specifically, we encourage DOC to reduce imports of Russian uranium below the existing twenty percent limit over the long-term. We will support efforts to codify those limits in law.

Last year, President Trump created the NFWG to recommend actions to strengthen our nation's nuclear fuel supply chain. On April 23, the Department of Energy published its report titled "*Restoring America's Competitive Nuclear Energy Advantage: A Strategy to Assure U.S. National Security."* The report was the culmination of the working group's efforts.

The report unequivocally states Russia has "weaponized" its energy supplies. It documents Russia's decades-long approach to target America's nuclear sector. The report concludes that Russian efforts to dominate the U.S. nuclear fuel cycle pose a serious national security threat. The strategy identifies 18 steps to revitalize our nation's nuclear industry.

It is imperative the Commerce Department successfully implement one of the report's key recommendations: to extend the RSA to protect against future uranium dumping in the U.S. market. DOC is currently negotiating an extension of the RSA with the Russian Federation. As you lead DOC's efforts to negotiate this agreement, we request you account for near-term nuclear fuel supply, accommodate the operational requirements of America's nuclear reactors and provide appropriate long-term protection for the domestic supply chain for nuclear fuel.

Additionally, your negotiations should be based on accurate uranium demand projections. The World Nuclear Association's (WNA) "Reference" scenario has consistently overestimated domestic uranium demand. We applaud you for correctly relying on WNA's lower scenario data and advise you continue this practice in extending the agreement.

When you successfully complete your negotiations in a timely manner, we will support the codification of DOC's agreement. Should the negotiations prove unsuccessful, we will pursue all paths to statutorily limit Russia's ability to manipulate our uranium markets.

The Russian Federation should know that Congress will not stand by while they unfairly manipulate the uranium market for their geostrategic purposes. We will not stand by while our nuclear industry is subjected to illegal energy market campaigns.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

John Barrasso, M.D.
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

Mike Braun
United States Senator

Tom Udall
United States Senator

Kevin Cramer
United States Senator

Mike Enzi
United States Senator

Tom Cotton
United States Senator

Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senator