Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 23, 2021

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm
Secretary of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Granholm:

Our nation's nuclear power plants operate nearly 24/7 and produce clean, reliable electricity while contributing millions of dollars to their local economies and providing high-paying jobs. Today, nuclear energy generates about 20% of our nation's electricity and about half of our low-carbon electricity. In addition, dozens of American companies supported by private capital are designing the next generation of nuclear reactors. These reactors are designed to be cheaper, more flexible, smaller, and even safer. They can provide both clean electricity and clean heat to decarbonize our electricity and industrial sectors. Finally, developing these reactors in the United States will allow for the export of reactor and fuel technologies to help reduce the 85 percent of greenhouse gas emissions that originate from countries other than the United States.

In the 116th Congress, there was bipartisan support for nuclear energy including the Nuclear Energy Leadership Act (H.R.3306; S.903) and the Nuclear Energy Research and Development Act (H.R.6097), both of which were included in the historic Energy Act of 2020.

In addition to the Department of Energy's ongoing efforts, the nuclear energy programs authorized in the Energy Act of 2020 have the potential to reestablish the United States as a global leader in nuclear energy. Without the successful implementation of these programs, our country will continue ceding its influence on climate policy and nuclear security to countries like China and Russia.

As you develop your priorities for the Office of Nuclear Energy, we urge you to fully implement the following programs and provisions authorized by the Energy Act of 2020:

1. Supporting the demonstration and first-of-a-kind deployment of advanced reactors, including the Advanced Reactor Demonstration Program, which seeks to demonstrate two next generation nuclear reactor designs and accelerate the development of five additional reactor designs. The most significant awards are to demonstrate two, first-of-a-kind reactors by 2027.

2. The Advanced Nuclear Fuel Availability Program, which will establish a consortium of advanced reactor companies to purchase the high-assay low-enriched uranium (HA-LEU) required for their designs. Today, HA-LEU is not commercially available in the United States. Having the Department of Energy (DOE) establish a consortium to understand the market needs, enter into contracts with industry, and procure or produce the necessary HA-LEU will help support these first mover companies while a commercial supply chain comes online and provide certainty for fuel companies that there is a market need.

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3. Complete in a timely manner the multiple reports and actions including how DOE will implement the Advanced Nuclear Fuel Availability Program, the development and use of advanced fuels, setting up a milestone-based development program, and the Office of Nuclear Energy's budget plan. With the rapidly changing nuclear industry, Congress, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and private industry need accurate and timely information from the DOE to make decisions.

President Biden has prioritized addressing climate change and accelerating economic recovery. The DOE is well positioned to lead on clean energy development and deployment. With this in mind, and the broad bipartisan support for nuclear energy in the House and Senate, it's clear nuclear energy can play a critical role in decarbonizing the energy sector domestically and abroad. We urge you and the rest of DOE leadership to fully implement these programs and welcome a meeting with you to discuss nuclear priorities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

ANTHONY GONZALEZ
Member of Congress

ELAINE G. LURIA
Member of Congress

RICHARD HUDSON
Member of Congress

ROBERT E. LATTA
Member of Congress

RALPH NORMAN
Member of Congress

PETER MEIJER
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CHERI BUSTOS
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