



US committed to nuclear, Chu tells Vogtle workers

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The Obama Administration is "committed to doing our part to help jumpstart America's nuclear industry," US energy secretary Steven Chu said during a visit to the Vogtle site in Georgia, where construction of two new reactors is due to start soon. He highlighted the steps that the Administration is taking to restart the country's nuclear industry.



Chu addresses workers at Vogtle (Image: DoE)

Speaking to more than 500 workers at the site, Chu said: "In his State of the Union address, President Obama outlined a blueprint for an American economy that is built to last and develops every available source of American energy. Nuclear power is an important part of that blueprint." He added, "Nuclear power is a vital part of our energy mix and we must do everything we can to develop it in a safe and secure manner." However, the Fukushima accident "reminds us that nuclear safety and security require continued vigilance, and we are committed to harnessing nuclear energy - and all our energy resources - in a safe and responsible manner."

He highlighted measures taken by the government so far to help stimulate the country's nuclear power industry, including providing an \$8 billion loan guarantee to support the construction of two Westinghouse AP1000 reactors at Vogtle. Chu also noted that the Department of Energy (DoE) had requested a budget of \$770 million for fiscal year 2012 for its nuclear energy program.

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Chu went on to announce a funding opportunity of up to \$10 million for "innovative, cross-cutting research and development for advanced nuclear reactor and fuel cycle technologies." He said, "We will invest in advanced manufacturing methods to more efficiently produce and design nuclear plant components. We'll also fund research in advanced materials for reactor vessels and other related structures as well as in the nuclear fuel cycle."

Chu also announced that the DoE is establishing an internal working group to assess the recommendation made by the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future and to "develop a strategy that builds on its excellent work." Chu said that "finding a workable way to end the stalemate over the safe and secure storage of used nuclear fuel is one of the most important things we can do to support this vital industry."

"The resurgence of America's nuclear energy industry starts here in Goergia, where you just got approval for the first time in three decades to build new reactors," Chu proclaimed. He added, "What you are doing here at Vogtle will help us compete in the global clean energy race and provide domestic, clean power to US homes."

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