

Nuclear Energy Must Be Part Of The National Mix

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The United States is poised for a manufacturing renaissance. Now it's up to policymakers to make sure that this country's policies match our goal of a revitalization of manufacturing.

One of the keys to U.S. competitiveness is a pro-growth energy policy. To reach their fullest potential, manufacturers need reliable and secure sources of energy—a challenge that will only grow in the coming years.

Even with conservation and greater efficiency, electricity demand is expected to grow 24% by 2035. Manufacturers use one-third of our nation's energy, so powering manufacturers is critical to powering our economy.

This is why it is welcome news indeed that four new power reactors have received their construction and operating licenses this year. Two were announced in February in Georgia, and two were announced in South Carolina late last month. Nuclear energy is a critical element of our current and future energy mix.

Nuclear facilities in 31 states already produce nearly 20% of America's electricity. Thanks to 24/7 productivity and continuing efficiency gains, including upgrades that increase generating capacity, nuclear energy helps ensure electricity is available when homes and businesses need it. This productivity goes hand-in-hand with the toughest safety protocols in the world.

Yet, despite the benefits of this clean energy source, the U.S. has lagged in building new reactors — until the licensing decisions this year. These advanced facilities in Georgia and South Carolina will begin a new era in U.S. energy production, supporting the jobs and economic growth our country needs while preserving our air quality.

Full construction can now begin at these two projects, which already employ nearly 3,000 construction workers. Communities near the projects are already seeing the economic benefits, which are set to expand significantly.

The new reactors in Georgia will be the state's largest construction project ever, with a workforce projected to top 3,500. In South Carolina, the project is providing 3,000 long-term construction jobs.

Billions of dollars will flow into state and local economies, and supply-chain opportunities will expand economic activity to include manufacturers and workers nationwide. About 90% of the components and materials used in the U.S.-designed reactors will be produced in America.

When construction is complete, these facilities will offer significant permanent work opportunities — as many as 800 career-long jobs for each of the projects in Georgia and South Carolina.

If we make the commitment necessary to expand nuclear energy as part of a balanced energy portfolio, we could see more than 14,000 new American jobs at other new reactors, plus another 25,000 hires at existing facilities to replace personnel expected to retire in the next five years.

Development of next-generation reactors by Georgia Power and South Carolina Electric & Gas is a critical milestone. The Georgia and South Carolina reactors underwent a thorough, fact-based process conducted over nearly four years by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). The result is the high level of confidence the public has a right to expect.

The next generation of nuclear facilities will be safer than ever. As the Nuclear Regulatory Commission adopts more stringent standards, Georgia Power and South Carolina Electric & Gas will make changes during construction to adhere to new requirements.

The American nuclear industry is committed to updating and improving its best practices throughout the construction and operation of its facilities. It strives to exceed NRC standards.

The need for affordable, reliable energy has never been greater, and the clearest way to achieve that goal is through development of

domestic energy, with nuclear power playing an important role. The national grassroots organization Clean and Safe Energy Coalition, to which we belong, believes our country needs new electricity sources of all types. We need to start developing them now.

Sixteen applications for new reactors remain in process. It's time to get them moving.

• *Whitman, former EPA administrator and New Jersey governor, and Timmons, president and CEO of the National Association of Manufacturers, are co-chair and member, respectively, of the [CASEnergy Coalition](#), which brings together more than 2,800 grassroots members from labor, industry, business, academia and environmental communities in support of nuclear energy expansion as part of a sustainable clean energy portfolio.*

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