



BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

April 26, 2012

Senator Dianne Feinstein, Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Energy  
and Water Development  
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Lamar Alexander, Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Energy  
and Water Development  
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Feinstein and Ranking Member Alexander,

We are writing in support of the work of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development and your leadership in developing the Fiscal Year 2013 Energy and Water Appropriations bill. We are encouraged to see spending included for key nuclear energy programs, including the DOE's Small Modular Reactor Program and a new program for centralized interim storage of spent nuclear fuel.

We believe that small modular nuclear reactors (SMRs) are an exciting frontier for nuclear technology and a compelling example of U.S. scientific capability and manufacturing potential. As co-chairmen of the Bipartisan Policy Center's Nuclear Initiative, we recently convened a diverse group of expert stakeholders to discuss the technical potential and commercial risks associated with SMRs. Dr. Pete Lyons, DOE Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy, discussed the SMR Licensing Technical Support program, a five-year industry cost-sharing effort to achieve design certification for two SMR designs and to support early stages of deployment. We believe this program, building on the successful Nuclear Power 2010 program, offers the best opportunity to commercialize these innovative nuclear technologies. In addition, we applaud the subcommittee's support for continued R&D on SMRs as well as other advanced reactor concepts that may enhance reactor safety and reduce radioactive waste challenges.

We also support provisions to develop a pilot program for consent-based siting of centralized interim storage for high level nuclear waste and spent nuclear fuel. We are encouraged that your proposed legislation adopts many of the principles recommended by the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future, on which Senator Pete Domenici served. Interim storage, which would allow the federal government to begin honoring its contracts to remove fuel from reactors sites, is essential to an integrated waste

management system. We believe that interim storage is an essential near-term step, regardless of where the final geologic repository is located. We support the creation of this pilot program and encourage the subcommittee to continue efforts to implement the full recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission.

We thank you for your leadership on these important issues.

Sincerely,



Pete V. Domenici

Co-chairman, BPC Nuclear Initiative



Warren F. Miller

Co-chairman, BPC Nuclear Initiative