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LONNIE R. STEPHENSON
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November 18, 2019

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2322A Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member Walden:

On behalf of the 775,000 active members and retirees of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), I write to urge your support of H.R. 2699, the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2019, bipartisan legislation which would modernize the federal government's ability to manage our nation's spent nuclear fuel by authorizing the Energy Department to open one or more interim storage sites in the near term and facilitate the licensing process for a permanent repository by resolving key issues such as land withdrawal and site infrastructure at Yucca Mountain, Nevada.

In 1982, Congress enacted the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA), calling for a permanent geologic repository for spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste. Thirty-five years later, over 80,000 tons of used fuel sits idle in 121 communities across 39 states. The NWPA established a 1998 deadline for the federal government to take ownership of the spent nuclear fuel. Since then, American taxpayers have paid more than \$40 billion for payments to nuclear utilities for disposal.

Nuclear energy in America produces nearly 20 percent of our nation's electricity, emission-free and accounts for over 50 percent of all zero-carbon emission generation in the country. Support for nuclear generation is critical if the United States is going to continue to reduce carbon emissions and avoid the worst impacts of climate change while meeting baseload energy demands for American citizens and businesses.

Fifteen thousand members of the IBEW are employed full-time in the nuclear industry at over 55 facilities across the United States. Thousands more IBEW members rotate through nuclear plants with the contractor workforce as needed for maintenance and refueling. The nuclear industry supplies high quality, long term, steady work that typically pays one-third more than the average jobs in their community. Additionally, America's nuclear plants are overwhelmingly located in rural areas and are most often the biggest employer and taxpayer in their communities.

Two years ago, the Energy and Commerce Committee acted by passing similar legislation by a 49-4 vote, which later passed the full U.S. House of





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Representatives in 2018 by a bipartisan 340-72 vote. While last year's legislation did not clear both chambers, I ask the Energy and Commerce Committee to try once more and recommend the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2019 to the full chamber. This issue is too important for further delay.

It is time for the United States Government to uphold its promise to taxpayers, communities and ratepayers and take possession of the spent nuclear fuel that has helped power our country for decades.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lonnie R. Stephenson".

Lonnie R. Stephenson
International President

LRS:mlm
Copy to All Members of the U.S. House Energy & Commerce Committee

