

March 31, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.
President of the United States
c/o Mr. Steve Ricchetti
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500



AFL-CIO



Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our strong support for a proposal to expand the advanced nuclear fuel demonstration project currently under construction in Ohio so that the facility can meet a broad range of U.S. government requirements. In addition to bringing hundreds of new union construction and operations jobs to the heart of coal country, the expansion would help catalyze the construction of a new generation of advanced nuclear reactors that will power the clean energy economy of the future.

Absent urgent action by your Administration, however, union workers at the existing demonstration could be laid off next year. Those jobs will go overseas. Foreign, state-owned enterprises that already dominate the market for existing nuclear fuels will come to dominate the market for advanced nuclear fuels, shutting out American companies and American workers. This is a major supply chain vulnerability for the United States and for your climate and clean energy agenda.

With support from the Department of Energy's Office of Nuclear Energy, union workers in Ohio are now building what will be the nation's first production facility for High-Assay, Low-Enriched Uranium (HALEU). As you know, a domestic supply of HALEU is critical to establishing American leadership in advanced nuclear – nine out of the ten reactors selected for the Department of Energy's Advanced Reactor Demonstration Program will need HALEU to operate. Last year, a survey of domestic reactor developers revealed that the lack of a domestic HALEU supply was the number one issue that "keeps you up at night." It is hard for reactor developers to sell reactors without a fuel supply, but it is equally difficult for private capital to build the fuel supply chain until enough HALEU-fueled reactors are under construction.

The problem is that what's under construction today is neither large enough to meet the government's requirements, nor is there funding in place to operate it beyond the expiration of the current contract early next year. The good news is that the facility itself is large enough to accommodate a much larger deployment, and the manufacturing supply chain needed to build all the additional centrifuges and supporting equipment can be mobilized very quickly.

As you can see in the attached proposal, starting with an initial investment of \$150 million in FY 2022, you could mobilize an army of union workers in Ohio to start expanding this first-of-a-kind, advanced nuclear fuel production facility.

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If unspent FY 2021 monies (or prior year carryover funds) can be identified, your Administration could start work today with a reprogramming request to jumpstart the expansion and provide immediate job creation.

The 13 MTU/year HALEU and 56 MTU/year LEU capacity covered in the proposal are the production levels necessary to meet U.S. government and national security requirements. But once the government's needs are met and some economies of scale have been established, private capital could be used to expand the facility incrementally as commercial requirements begin to take shape. **By leveraging the U.S. government's past and future investments in national security capabilities, we can solve the chicken vs. egg problem and unlock the vast potential of advanced nuclear sector to create clean-energy jobs and prodigious amounts of carbon-free power.**

Over the next eight to ten years, the project is expected to support 1,500 direct jobs, including hundreds of union construction and operations jobs at the plant site in Ohio. And that doesn't even begin to count the many thousands of workers across many states who will be needed to build and operate the fleet of next generation reactors that will operate on HALEU and supply the clean energy America needs.

This is precisely what it means to "Build Back Better." **We are requesting that your Build Back Better initiative commit the United States to restore U.S. capability to enrich uranium to support our national security and clean energy objectives.** Mr. President, if you are ready to make this investment in America's clean energy future in the heart of coal country, the workers we represent are ready to stand behind you and get to work.

Sincerely,

Lonnie R. Stephenson, International President
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Richard L. Trumka, President
AFL-CIO

Sean McGarvey, President
North America's Building Trades Unions

Thomas Conway, International President
United Steelworkers (USW)

cc:

The Honorable Lloyd Austin, Secretary of Defense
The Honorable Jennifer Granholm, Secretary of Energy
The Honorable Jake Sullivan, National Security Advisor
The Honorable Susan Rice, Domestic Policy Advisor
The Honorable Regina McCarthy, National Climate Advisor
The Honorable Brian Deese, National Economic Council Director