Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 14, 2020

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Inhofe
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Smith and Inhofe and Ranking Members Thornberry and Reed:

As you work to negotiate the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we write to convey our strong support for retaining Title LXVII (Nuclear Energy Leadership) of the Senate bill in the final conference report. This title would jumpstart innovation in advanced nuclear energy and secure American leadership in the international nuclear sector.

In recent years, China and Russia have developed their nuclear energy industries and transitioned to assisting other nations with theirs. During this critical time, the United States has missed opportunities to invest in advanced nuclear energy development and innovation. The United States must reestablish itself as a global leader to implement cutting edge technologies that impact military readiness and curb proliferation efforts.

Nuclear energy offers efficient and reliable energy to our defense sector. Advanced nuclear designs carry potential for the American economy, our national security, and our electric grid, as they can provide a steady source of clean energy and help decarbonize carbon-intensive applications such as high-heat industrial processes. The Nuclear Energy Leadership title will facilitate the path to market for advanced reactors by allowing the federal government to be an early adopter of commercialized technologies and demonstrating innovative concepts in partnership with the private sector.

The Nuclear Energy Leadership title, as passed in S. 4049, contains several provisions designed to jumpstart innovation in advanced nuclear energy. These provisions include:

- Section 6701, which would provide for at least two advanced nuclear reactor demonstration projects, to be completed by the end of 2025;

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- Section 6702, which would establish a nationwide strategy for nuclear science and engineering research and development;
- Section 6703, which would require the Department of Energy to provide a source for fast-neutron research, which will be key for testing advanced nuclear concepts;
- Section 6704, which would create a program to begin supplying reactors with High-Assay Low-Enriched Uranium (HALEU), fuel which will be needed for many advanced reactor designs; and,
- Section 6705, which would establish a University Nuclear Leadership Program to provide scholarships and funding for students pursuing studies in nuclear science.

These provisions will help create the conditions needed for the United States to become the world leader in advanced nuclear energy innovation. We respectfully ask that the FY 2021 conference agreement retain Title LXVII of S. 4049. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

Elaine G. Luria
Member of Congress

Cory Booker
United States Senator

Lamar Alexander
United States Senator

Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

Kevin Cramer
United States Senator

Mike Crapo
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Doug Jones
United States Senator

/S/
Rob Portman
United States Senator

James E. Risch
United States Senator

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

Ben Cline
Member of Congress

Mike Doyle
Member of Congress

Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

John Garamendi
Member of Congress

Kendra Horn
Member of Congress

Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

Andy Kim
Member of Congress

Conor Lamb
Member of Congress

Scott Peters
Member of Congress

Denver Riggleman
Member of Congress

David P. Roe, M.D.
Member of Congress

David Rouzer
Member of Congress

Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress

Abigail D. Spanberger
Member of Congress