

SMACNA Endorsed Nuclear Power Bill Becomes Law After Many Years of Advocacy

CHANTILLY, Va., July 10, 2024 – The Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA), supported by more than 3,500 construction firms engaged in industrial, commercial, residential, architectural and specialty sheet metal and air conditioning construction throughout the United States, today applauds President's signing of The ADVANCE ACT, legislation to accelerate the deployment of nuclear energy capacity, including by speeding up permitting and creating new incentives for advanced nuclear reactor technologies.

SMACNA CEO Aaron Hilger noted, "Our member firms have advocated for this bipartisan landmark legislation for nearly a decade and had filed countless letters and hearing statements in favor of its passage. SMACNA firms have nearly a half century of experience constructing and maintaining nuclear-powered energy facilities and have special enthusiasm for the financing and training provisions in the US nuclear infrastructure portfolio. These new nuclear technologies, including microreactors, are capable of radically reducing carbon emissions but represent just one of the high efficiency, low carbon energy solutions our firms construct and maintain," Hilger emphasized. "Importantly, the legislation would reauthorize critical training programs to bolster our skilled and specialized nuclear work force numbers."

The ADVANCE ACT also modernizes licensing requirements to address the needs of new technology and identifies regulatory barriers that limit the safe deployment of new nuclear technologies. It also directs the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to create a pathway for conventional energy source sites to be repurposed in the future. Importantly, the legislation reauthorizes critical training programs to bolster our skilled and specialized nuclear work force numbers.

Key Provisions:

In the bill: Among the numerous provisions in the ADVANCE Act are the following [directives to the NRC](#):

- Enhance preparedness and coordination to qualify and license advanced reactor fuel.
- Within 18 months, develop risk-informed, performance-based strategies and guidance to license and regulate microreactors.
- Within 180 days, submit a report to Congress on manufacturing and construction for nuclear energy projects.
- Within a year, update its mission statement to convey that licensing and regulation of nuclear energy activities be conducted in a manner that does not unnecessarily limit "the benefits of nuclear energy technology to society."
- Identify and report on regulations, guidance, or policy necessary to license and oversee nuclear facilities at brownfield sites.

SMACNA also emphasized to Congress that expanding nuclear power, although stalled for many years from passing, has enjoyed broad bipartisan support, with a growing movement seeing it as critical to decarbonizing the power sector to fight climate change and as a way to ensure reliable electricity supply. A version of the Senate passed bill recently passed the House of Representatives, and when the Senate version arrived at the White House, President Biden, long a nuclear power advocate, signed it.