

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 8, 2022

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chair
Subcommittee on Energy & Water
Development
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Kennedy
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy & Water
Development
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Feinstein and Ranking Member Kennedy:

As the Committee negotiates the final fiscal year (FY) 2023 Energy and Water Development appropriation and possibly supplemental appropriations, we urge you to include funding for U.S. nuclear fuel security consistent with section 8103 of S.A. 5499, the FY 2023 National Defense Authorization Act.

In 2021, Russia supplied 14 percent of the uranium that America's existing nuclear reactors used. During that year, Russia was tied with Australia as America's third-largest supplier of uranium. Despite numerous sanctions against Russia in response to their brutal invasion of Ukraine, Russian uranium has yet to be sanctioned. As we continue working to eliminate imports of Russian uranium, a focused strategic investment in the domestic nuclear fuel supply chain is imperative. This investment is critical to ensure America's nuclear reactors will not have to rely on Russia for nuclear fuel.

Additionally, the U.S. lacks a domestic enrichment capability to produce the high-assay, low-enriched uranium (HALEU) needed for advanced reactors, including the demonstration projects that have already received billions in funding from Congress. Russia and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) are currently the only sources of HALEU in the world. America is developing the world's most advanced nuclear reactors. We cannot allow them to be fueled with Russian uranium. DOE is progressing with its HALEU demonstration project and is poised to partner with domestic uranium suppliers to create a commercial-scale domestic HALEU enrichment capability, but without additional funding and direction, the agency cannot take the additional steps necessary to ensure a domestic fuel supply for existing and advanced reactors.

Additionally, DOE needs a clear signal from appropriators that activities to make HALEU produced from DOE inventories available for use in advanced reactors is urgently needed until sufficient U.S. commercial HALEU enrichment comes online.

On December 1, Assistant Secretary of Energy for Nuclear Energy, Dr. Kathryn Huff testified before the Energy and Natural Resources Committee that:

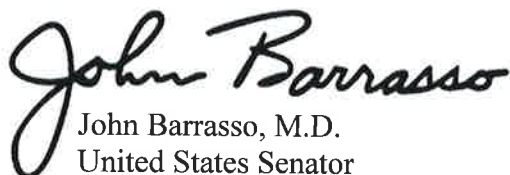
"The Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has demonstrated the grave threat to

global energy security posed by dependence on Russian-supplied fuels... We cannot continue to infuse the Russian state with this source of income [from Russian uranium imports], especially as it engages in reckless strikes that threaten a nuclear incident in Ukraine... Expanding our domestic fuel capacity will require a significant strategic investment coupled with import restrictions that protect those investments well into the future."

As Dr. Huff advises, we must address domestic nuclear fuel security now. We look forward to working with you to secure the necessary appropriations and authorizations to revitalize the U.S. nuclear fuel supply chain and permanently eliminate Russian uranium imports.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


John Barrasso, M.D.
United States Senator


Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



James E. Risch
United States Senator


Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator


Rob Portman
United States Senator


Martin Heinrich
United States Senator


Cory Booker
United States Senator


Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator



Thom Tillis
United States Senator



Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



Cynthia M. Lummis
United States Senator



Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator

Cc: Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Shelby