

the energy needs,” FERC Chairman Kevin McIntyre said.

MICRO-REACTORS

Defense act includes funding for pilot program

A provision in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, signed on August 13 by President Donald Trump, calls for a report to investigate the feasibility of developing a pilot program for operating a micro-reactor—defined in the legislation as having a capacity not greater than 50 megawatts—at a national security facility. Energy Secretary Rick Perry has 12 months from the enactment date of the act to prepare the report, which is to describe the requirements for and components of such a pilot program and for operating a

micro-reactor at a Department of Defense or Department of Energy facility.

The report would identify potential locations for the micro-reactor, based on a site “that contains critical national security infrastructure that the secretary determines may not be energy resilient,” according to the act. The report would also estimate the costs of the pilot program and establish a potential timeline, with an initial goal for one reactor to be up and running by December 31, 2027. The bill does not authorize the signing of a contract to build a micro-reactor, but rather opens up the idea for further consideration, with the goal of securing power generation for DOD and DOE facilities.

Nevertheless, NuScale Power, Oklo Inc., Westinghouse Electric Company, and X-Energy LLC are among the companies that could benefit if a micro-reactor project were to move ahead. These companies are developing reactors that have the po-

tential to be built in an off-site factory and then moved to the plant site to produce electricity or provide heat for other purposes. Such reactors are said to be suitable as a reliable power supply, particularly for remote locations.

The secretary of defense, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the head of the General Services Administration will provide input for the report.

“As an emphasis continues to be placed on clean energy, countries around the globe are pursuing nuclear power for the carbon-free, reliable electricity it produces,” said Maria Korsnick, president and chief operating officer of the Nuclear Energy Institute. “This bill helps to ensure American companies are at the table with our foreign competitors so that we can continue to provide our technology and, in doing so, set international nonproliferation, security, and safety standards for years to come.”



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