

New House and Senate bills would advance nuclear energy technology

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Two new bipartisan bills have been introduced in both chambers of Congress in an effort to expand the use of nuclear energy. Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK) introduced the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (S. 2795) in the Senate on April 13, and Rep. Bob Latta (R-OH) introduced the Advanced Nuclear Technology Development Act (H.R. 4979) in the House on April 18. S. 2795 aims to reform the licensing process for nuclear reactors and restructure funding for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to encourage engagement with early-stage companies that cannot afford current NRC regulatory fees. H.R. 4979 would encourage more collaboration between the Department of Energy and the NRC by making NRC more accountable for developing a licensing framework to create advanced reactors.

At a hearing held for S. 2795, several witnesses from industry testified that NRC's current licensing process is a huge obstacle for many advanced reactor technologies and must be changed, with which the Senators agreed. NRC Administrator for Region II, Victor McCree, however, shared the agency's concern that the bill would require more time and resources than NRC had previously allocated.

A hearing for H.R. 4979 and the draft Nuclear Utilization of Keynote Energy Policies Act, sponsored by Adam Kinzinger (R-IL), was held by the House Energy and Commerce committee on April 29. Both bills received bipartisan support from the committee. Sources: Congress.gov, E&E News, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, House Committee on Energy and Commerce
