



**U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Public Affairs**

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**For Immediate Release:
Monday, February 15, 2012**

Chu Visits Site of America's First New Nuclear Reactor in Three Decades

Energy Secretary Announces New Nuclear Energy Research Grants and Next Steps on Used Fuel Recommendations

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Just two days after the Department of Energy requested more than \$770 million for nuclear energy in 2013, U.S. Secretary of Energy Steven Chu visited the Vogtle nuclear power plant in Waynesboro, Georgia and Oak Ridge National Laboratory to highlight the steps the Obama Administration is taking to restart America's nuclear industry as part of an all-of-the-above American energy strategy.

During remarks to more than 500 workers at the Vogtle nuclear power plant, Secretary Chu highlighted the wide variety of steps the Obama Administration has taken to help restart America's nuclear energy industry. He also announced up to \$10 million in new funding for innovative research and development in advanced nuclear reactor and fuel cycle technologies and highlighted some of the steps that the Department is taking to implement the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future.

After visiting Vogtle, the site of the first of the next generation of passively safe nuclear reactors to be built in the United States, Secretary Chu also toured the Nuclear Modeling and Simulation Energy Innovation Hub at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Established in 2010, the hub harnesses the skills of the nation's brightest scientists and engineers and the National Laboratories' supercomputing capabilities to improve nuclear reactor design, engineering and efficiency.

“In his State of the Union address, President Obama outlined a blueprint for an American economy that is built to last and develops every available source of American energy,” said Secretary Chu. “Nuclear power is an important part of that blueprint. The work being done in Georgia and at research organizations like Oak Ridge National Laboratory is helping restore American leadership in the global race for the nuclear energy jobs of tomorrow.”

The \$10 million in new research funds announced by the Secretary will support research that is intended to solve common challenges across the nuclear industry and improve reactor safety, performance and cost competitiveness. The funding will be awarded through two programs:

- Advanced Methods for Manufacturing (up to \$3 million over three years) will fund projects working to improve the production and design efficiency of nuclear plant components. Small modular, gas-cooled, high-temperature and traditional light water reactors will be considered under this category.

- Reactor Materials (up to \$7 million over three years) will fund research in advanced materials for reactor vessels, piping, cladding or other related structures in nuclear reactors as well as in the nuclear fuel cycle.

Secretary Chu also spoke about the Administration's commitment to developing an effective strategy for the safe and secure storage and management of used nuclear fuel. Last month, the Blue Ribbon Commission for America's Nuclear Future presented Secretary Chu with its final recommendations. Today, the Secretary announced that he has established an internal working group directed with assessing those recommendations and developing an Administration strategy that builds on the Commission's work.

This builds on steps the Department is taking in FY 2012 and has proposed for FY 2013 to lay the foundation for a new strategy for the back end of the nuclear fuel cycle. In the budget request presented to Congress earlier this week, the Department requested \$60 million for nuclear waste R&D that aligns with recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Commission. It includes funds that will be used to evaluate consolidated interim storage and transportation issues focused initially on decommissioned sites; work with industry to develop standardized approaches to used fuel management; conduct material testing to support extended storage of used fuel; initiate actions identified by the National Academy of Sciences transportation report; and initiate research on geologic disposal alternative environments, e.g. system modeling, engineered barriers, natural barriers, evaluation of design concepts, and experiments.

Today's announcements are the latest in a long list of steps the Obama Administration has taken to help jumpstart America's nuclear energy industry:

- In 2010, the Department signed a conditional commitment for \$8 billion in loan guarantees to support the Vogtle project, where the Southern Company and Georgia Power are building two new nuclear reactors, helping to create new jobs and export opportunities for American workers and businesses.
- The Energy Department has also supported the Vogtle project and the development of the next generation of nuclear reactors by providing more than \$200 million through a cost-share agreement to support the licensing reviews for Westinghouse's AP1000 reactor design certification. The Vogtle license is the first for new nuclear power plant construction in more than three decades.
- The Department has worked to advance small modular reactors, which provide an important opportunity for America's manufacturing sector to make and sell cutting-edge technology. Small modular reactors have the added advantage of passive safety systems, compact and scalable design and lower capital costs.
- Promoting a sustainable nuclear industry in the U.S. also requires cultivating the next generation of scientists and engineers. Over the past three years, the Department has invested \$170 million in research grants at more than 70 universities, supporting R&D into a full spectrum of technologies, from advanced reactor concepts to enhanced safety design.

Secretary Chu's remarks as prepared for delivery are available [HERE](#).

For more information on the Department's support for nuclear energy, visit www.energy.gov.