

Mr. Chair and Members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SF 3120, appropriating funds for a study of advanced nuclear reactors in Minnesota.

My testimony will be split into two sections, one discussing the necessity of nuclear power in Minnesota's future energy mix and another giving guidance on specific items that would be beneficial to include in the study.

Nuclear is Needed

Blue states around the country are realizing that attempting to reduce emissions from the electricity sector without using nuclear power is a costly strategy that reduces the reliability of the electric grid.

California, which suffered rolling blackouts in 2020 and has experienced many near-misses since, has learned firsthand that wind, solar, and battery storage are insufficient to keep the lights on, which is why Democrats have changed their mind on closing the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant in the state.

This is a welcome nod to physics, the most fundamental of all the sciences, and is representative of a broader shift in attitudes toward nuclear power throughout the country. For example, Illinois recently lifted its ban on new nuclear power plants, specifically allowing the construction of small modular nuclear reactors.

Last session, Minnesota passed its 100 percent carbon-free electricity by 2040 mandate without lifting the ban on building new nuclear power plants. This is a grave mistake because our report on the Blackout Bill concluded it is far more expensive to reliably meet electricity demand relying on largely wind, solar, and battery storage than building new nuclear power plants.

American Experiment believes Minnesota should be lifting its moratorium on all new nuclear power plants, including small modular reactors and new large reactors, and we hope this study will help lawmakers and the general public understand the important role that nuclear power must play in our future energy portfolio to prevent rolling blackouts and to provide affordable power to Minnesota families and businesses.

Guidance

- This study should compare the reliability impacts and cost of meeting Minnesota's 100 percent carbon-free mandates with and without new nuclear power plants.

- The study should study the feasibility of utilizing existing coal facilities as a location for the construction of new nuclear reactors to reduce transmission expenses and to provide a “just transition” to these power plant communities.
- This study should study the feasibility of allowing large power consumers, such as data centers and mining operations, to have their own privately owned, onsite nuclear power plants to reduce their overall energy costs while reducing emissions.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective. I’m happy to answer any questions you may have. Have a great day.