

CLEARPATH

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Federal Government Must Ensure Advanced Nuclear Uranium Supply

Congress, the Trump administration and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission must take prompt steps to ensure adequate supply of high-assay low-enriched uranium (HA-LEU) or risk continued progress in deploying the next generation of U.S. nuclear power, according to a [new white paper](#) sponsored by ClearPath and the U.S. Nuclear Infrastructure Council (USNIC).

Many of the current advanced reactors under development intend to utilize HA-LEU as fuel to provide greater efficiency. This type of uranium is commercially produced in countries such as France, Russia and China, but not in the U.S.

Former NRC Commissioner Jeffrey Merrifield and Pillsbury Law Firm Senior Associate Anne Leidich lay out 10 recommendations for lawmakers, policymakers and NRC to step up to this supply challenge.

Among the recommendations:

- Establishing a “strategic reserve” of HA-LEU within five years
- Develop a fast neutron test facility requiring designs that utilize HA-LEU to catalyze its early production
- Direct some of the Department of Energy’s current inventory of highly enriched uranium for this purpose
- Ensure adequate capabilities to transport HA-LEU within five years and expedite licensing by NRC and the Department of Transportation of containers for advanced reactor fuels
- Expedite NRC reviews and approvals of increased enrichments of uranium

There are nearly 60 advanced nuclear concepts in North America under development and large numbers outside the U.S., according to a [2017 report](#) from Third Way. A USNIC March 2017 survey of 18 leading U.S.-based advanced reactor developers found that 67% said an “assured supply of High Assay LEU” was either urgent or important, with 50% of the overall respondents saying it was “urgent.”

[READ THE FULL WHITE PAPER](#)

About ClearPath

Founded by businessman Jay Faison, ClearPath's mission is to accelerate conservative clean energy solutions. To advance the mission, ClearPath develops cutting-edge policy and messaging and works with policymakers and industry.

About USNIC

USNIC is the leading U.S. business consortium for new nuclear and the promotion of the American supply chain globally. These views represent the specific views of the co-authors and the consensus of the Council but do not necessarily represent the specific views of individual USNIC members.