

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

July 10, 2020

Mr. Adam Boehler
Chief Executive Officer
U.S. International Development Finance Corporation
1100 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20527

Dear Mr. Boehler:

The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) recently opened a public comment period on its decision to lift its prohibition on financial support for nuclear energy projects. We write in support of this change, but recommend that the development of advanced nuclear reactors in other countries maintain the gold standard of safety as currently enforced by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

The current funding prohibition at DFC was carried over from the predecessor program at the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. This policy has since become outdated because of advances in nuclear technology, the expanding global market for nuclear led by China and Russia, and the need to expand emission free technologies to other countries.

The DFC in partnership with the private sector has the opportunity to leverage funds to address challenges facing developing countries across the energy, healthcare, and infrastructure sectors. This includes fostering investments in nuclear technologies, like small modular reactors and micro-reactors. This work can help establish the United States as a world leader in transformative energy projects that help address climate change.

The DFC can provide financial alternatives to state-directed nuclear investment offered by countries like China and Russia that may leave developing countries burdened with debt. Russia and China are also researching new reactor designs to capture the emerging market for advanced nuclear and the global influence that will come with it, often with less concern about security and non-proliferation.

Our support for the DFC rule change is contingent upon NRC continuing to work collaboratively with other countries to ensure stringent safety protocols remain in place for licensing and regulation of these new reactors. We recently gave the NRC authority to develop a new licensing and regulatory framework to better assess and govern advanced reactors in the United States. We should use lessons learned at home to translate our new licensing and regulatory structure for these technologies to other countries.

We also urge that, given the choice, you give preference to emerging technologies that are more proliferation resistant, generate less waste, or can safely re-use existing nuclear waste stockpiles as fuel for carbon-free reactors. There are significant benefits from developing such technologies including a reduced need for uranium production and enrichment, and a reduced hazardous lifetime of waste products.

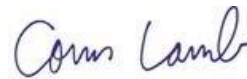
Given the strong development mandate of the DFC, as stipulated in the BUILD Act that created the agency, we encourage you to prioritize supporting advanced nuclear technology in emerging and frontier markets. The fast-growing economies of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East are those most in demand for low-carbon energy and are also the markets for which the DFC was designed to support.

In closing, we support lifting the DFC's nuclear prohibition to help advance low-carbon energy solutions globally, but this change must ensure critical safety structures for licensing and regulation. Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,



Sheldon Whitehouse
U.S. Senator



Conor Lamb
U.S. Representative

Cory A. Booker /s/

Cory A. Booker
U.S. Senator

Christopher A. Coons /s/

Christopher A. Coons
U.S. Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin /s/

Benjamin L. Cardin
U.S. Senator

Elaine G. Luria /s/

Elaine G. Luria
U.S. Representative

Chrissy Houlahan /s/

Chrissy Houlahan
U.S. Representative

Mike Doyle /s/

Mike Doyle
U.S. Representative

Scott Peters /s/

Scott Peters
U.S. Representative