March 2026

In our latest edition of NENSC News, the **Nuclear Energy and National Security Coalition (NENSC)** brings you the latest industry news, events you don't want to miss, and policies we are watching. Be sure to keep scrolling to learn how you can follow us and stay up to date with the latest information you need.

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TOP STORIES

NEW *"ATOMICALLY SPEAKING"* PODCASTS

NENSC has recorded several new podcasts with experts on nuclear energy and national security matters.

NENSC Co-Chair **Daniel Poneman and Dr. Kim Budil**, Director of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, recently talk about the path that led her to leading the Laboratory, reflections on the history of the lab and its prior leaders, and explore the science of fusion, its potential commercial viability, and the role of NIF and fusion testing in ensuring the safety of the U.S. nuclear stockpile. **Listen HERE**.

Additionally, **Mr. Poneman** and **Dr. John Wagner**, Director of the Idaho National Laboratory, talk about the Laboratory's historic role in Advanced Reactor Technology, his perspective on the future direction of modern Advanced Reactor Technology in the United States, and his thoughts on the safety of nuclear applications in the U.S. and other countries around the world. **Listen HERE.**

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

DOE PUBLISHES REVISED NUCLEAR RULES AMID SAFETLY DEBATE: The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has **publicly released** revised nuclear safety rules for experimental reactors under its Reactor Pilot Program, reducing certain environmental, security, and operational requirements. The changes follow President Trump's **directive** to have at least

three advanced reactors online by July 4, 2026. DOE officials say the updates modernize and streamline the authorization process without compromising standards.

POLAND ADVANCES STANDARDIZED BWRX-300 SMR DESIGN: GE Vernova Hitachi Nuclear Energy and Orlen Synthos Green Energy (OSGE) have signed an **agreement** to develop a detailed, Poland-specific generic design for the BWRX-300 SMR. The standardized design—adapted to Polish regulations and safety requirements—will serve as a reference model for a planned fleet of up to 24 SMRs, streamlining licensing, lowering costs, and strengthening domestic supply chain participation. The move is a strategic step toward building both large-scale and SMR nuclear capacity to meet rising electricity demand and support industrial growth, with the first BWRX-300 targeted for completion in 2032.

SOUTH KOREA AND PHILIPPINES LAUNCH NUCLEAR COOPERATION: South Korea's Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power, the Export-Import Bank of Korea, and the Philippines' Manila Electric Company **signed an MoU** to cooperate on developing nuclear power projects in the Philippines. The agreement covers technology collaboration, workforce training, feasibility studies, and potential financing for new nuclear plants—pairing Korean technical and financial capabilities with Meralco's local energy expertise. The partnership supports the Philippines' goal of deploying its first nuclear capacity by 2032 as part of a broader effort to strengthen long-term energy security.

TÜRKIYE AND CANADA EXPLORE CANDU REACTOR DEVELOPMENT: Candu Energy, part of AtkinsRéalis, **signed an MoU** with Türkiye Nuclear Energy Company (TÜNAŞ) to assess the potential deployment of Canadian CANDU reactors in Turkey. The partners will evaluate reactor technology options, site suitability, regulatory requirements, financing models, and workforce development as Turkey expands its nuclear program beyond the Akkuyu plant currently under construction.

EU UNVEILS STRATEGY TO DEPLOY SMRs BY EARLY 2030s: The European Commission **released a strategy** to accelerate SMR development, with the goal of bringing Europe's first projects online in the early 2030s. The plan calls for coordinated deployment across EU member states, a competitive supply chain, closer regulatory cooperation, and additional investment in research and workforce development. The Commission estimates 17–53 GW of SMR capacity could be deployed by 2050 and projects that €241 billion in nuclear investment will be needed to sustain existing reactors and scale new technologies.

UK PROPOSES REGULATORY CHANGES TO SPEED NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT: UK Energy Secretary Ed Miliband has **proposed reforms** intended to accelerate nuclear development, including changes that could allow new plants to be built closer to residential areas and certain sensitive sites. The proposals would simplify planning rules and remove policy barriers to speed delivery of major projects, including large plants such as Sizewell C and future SMRs. Supporters argue the reforms would bolster energy security and help control costs.

US-JAPAN LAUNCH $40B NUCLEAR PROJECT TO POWER AI GROWTH: President Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi announced a **$40 billion plan** to build SMRs in Tennessee and Alabama through a U.S.–Japan investment fund. Led by GE Vernova and Hitachi, the initiative aims to expand reliable electricity supply, support AI-driven data center demand, and strengthen U.S. technological leadership. While SMRs could be deployed faster and more flexibly than traditional reactors, they still face regulatory hurdles and have yet to be

connected to the U.S. grid. The project is part of a broader $550 billion bilateral investment pact tied to trade concessions and industrial policy goals.

KAZAKHSTAN ADVANCES NUCLEAR BUILDOUT AND URANIUM EXPANSION PLANS: Kazakhstan **announced a push** to expand its nuclear energy program, including plans to finalize agreements with Russia to build its first nuclear power plant and to pursue additional projects with international partners. The government is also advancing a national strategy through 2050, alongside regulatory updates and workforce development. In parallel, Kazakhstan is increasing uranium output and expanding global supply agreements, reinforcing its position as the world's leading uranium producer while laying the groundwork for domestic nuclear deployment.

CHINA MARKS KEY MILESTONES IN NUCLEAR PLANT CONSTRUCTION: Two major Chinese nuclear projects reached new construction milestones, including the **installation of a large structural module** at the Bailong plant and the placement of a steam generator at Lufeng. The updates underscore continued momentum in China's large-scale nuclear buildout, supported by standardized reactor designs and modular construction methods aimed at accelerating delivery of new generating capacity.

JAPAN'S ENERGY PICTURE FIFTEEN YEARS POST-FUKUSHIMA: Fifteen years on from its worst-ever nuclear accident, Japan is **welcoming nuclear power back** into its energy mix. Senior Fellows Daniel Poneman and Clara Gillispie, discuss Fukushima's legacy and nuclear energy's role in Japan's future.

IN THE NEWS

ANS: Bowen to Lead New Office of Advanced Reactors

COLUMBIA SIPA: The Importance of an Independent Nuclear Safety Regulator: Roundtable Summary

E&E NEWS: NRC Weighs Slashing Inspections as Part of a Wider Agency Shake-up

ENERGY WORLD: India, Canada All Set to Ink a 10-Year Deal on Uranium Supply

NEKKEI ASIA: Japan Considers Burying Nuclear Waste on Easternmost Minamitorishima Island

NPR: Secretly Rewritten Nuclear Safety Rules are Made Public

NUCLEAR ENERGY INTERNATIONAL: Switzerland Reconsiders Nuclear Exit

NUCLEAR ENERGY INTERNATIONAL: Greece Considers Nuclear

POLITICO PRO: Poland Investigates Iran Links Behind Cyberattack on Nuclear Facility *[Paywall]*

POWER: Nuclear Sprint: DOE and Industry Race to Meet Trump's Target

POWERMAG: China's Advanced Nuclear Efforts Are Pushing Frontiers

THE CONVERSATION: Iran's Nuclear Materials and Equipment Remain a Danger in an Active War Zone

THIRD WAY: 2026 Update to the Global Nuclear Market Map: From Blueprint to Buildout

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Please note that we are not able to commit to the completion of any specific request. All feedback will be kept confidential.

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