



Policy Alert: Executive Orders Hope to Jumpstart Nuclear Energy Industry

Updated 04 June 2025

Action: On May 23, the President signed a series of Executive Orders seeking to bolster the nuclear energy industry. The four executive orders focus on the [deployment of advanced nuclear reactor technology](#), reforms to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), reforms to the Department of Energy's (DOE) nuclear reactor testing process, and new support for expanding the US nuclear industrial base. Similar efforts to support the development of nuclear energy have [continued globally](#) and have [support across the political spectrum](#). While these initiatives may present new market opportunities to grow the country's nuclear energy footprint, potential reforms to existing safety and oversight regulations may present risks to future growth.

Key Insights

- National security implications are a key driver across this effort. One Order directs the Federal government to accelerate efforts to the use of advanced nuclear reactors at military installations and Department of Energy facilities. It emphasizes building and stockpiling nuclear fuel using domestically sourced uranium and related materials. Furthermore, the Order highlights the need to streamline and prioritize the security clearance processes that may currently slow nuclear technology development, raising questions about existing bottlenecks in security approvals as well as questions about the handling of sensitive technology and deployment safety.
- The Administration believes the NRC's current approach to reactor licensing is overly risk-averse. To overcome what it considers rigid safety models, the Order aims to cut

existing regulatory and cost barriers, fast-track advanced reactor approvals, and reopen shuttered facilities. These efforts involve a cultural and structural overhaul of the NRC, downsizing the staff, and minimizing external advisory roles in coordination with DOGE. A comprehensive rulemaking process outlining next steps is expected within nine months to support the “wholesale revision” of various aspects of NRC operations including regulations on radiation standards, environmental compliance, and the licensing process.

- The Orders also target nuclear reactor testing to address what the Administration terms “overregulated complacency.” It mandates a revision of reactor testing regulations within 90 days to accelerate the review and deployment of advanced nuclear technologies significantly. The Order introduces staffing and reporting reforms to support faster approvals and launches a pilot program to construct reactors outside of National Labs into the commercial space—aiming for at least three approved by July 2026, a very rapid schedule.
- One Order focused on supporting the nuclear industrial base seeks to establish nuclear energy as a cornerstone of US energy security and production. It directs the DOE to expedite the development of advanced nuclear reactors and rebuild the domestic nuclear fuel cycle, with a focus on recycling and reprocessing spent nuclear fuel to reduce waste and increase efficiency. The Order also calls for accelerating the construction of new nuclear plants—targeting ten new large reactors and increasing output from existing ones. To secure the supply chain, it leverages the [Defense Production Act](#) to ensure the availability of enriched uranium and support domestic fuel production capabilities.
- Nuclear energy proponents have [supported these actions](#) as a new opportunity for the industry’s growth in support of energy portfolio diversification and decarbonization. However, some critics suggest that the coordinated deregulatory shift toward expedience may come at the expense of safety and environmental concerns. One Order specifically criticizes the current [environmental review process](#) as detrimental to nuclear energy development, despite the [potential harms](#) from nuclear waste. Further, some former NRC officials have [expressed concerns](#) toward the proposed reforms, suggesting that they may compromise safety and undercut longer-term development.

The Conference Board is the Member-driven think tank that delivers *Trusted Insights for What's Ahead*[®]. Founded in 1916, we are a nonpartisan, not-for-profit entity holding 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status in the United States.

© 2026 The Conference Board, Inc.