LOTSIXTEEN

Committee:	Senate Environment & Public Works Subcommittee on Clean Air, Climate & Nuclear Innovation and Safety
Event:	Hearing to Examine the Build Nuclear with Local Materials Act, RECHARGE Act, and Enrichment Licensing Modernization Act
Date:	May 20, 2026

Executive Summary:

On May 20, 2026, the Senate Environment & Public Works Subcommittee on Clean Air, Climate & Nuclear Innovation and Safety held a hearing on the Build Nuclear with Local Materials Act (S. 4529), Enrichment Licensing Modernization Act discussion draft (S.), and the RECHARGE Act discussion draft (S.).

- Republicans and Democrats agreed that rising energy demand will require significant expansion of reliable baseload power through advanced nuclear energy.
- Members across both parties described the need to modernize the nuclear licensing process, strengthen domestic uranium enrichment and conversion capacity, reduce reliance on Russian uranium imports, and accelerate deployment of advanced reactors at brownfield sites.

Legislation Discussed:

- The Build Nuclear with Local Materials Act would direct the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to allow commercial-grade concrete and steel in non-safety-related portions of nuclear plants, helping reduce construction costs and deployment timelines while maintaining strong safety standards.
- The Enrichment Licensing Modernization Act would modernize and streamline NRC licensing for uranium enrichment facilities to help strengthen the domestic nuclear fuel supply chain and reduce reliance on foreign sources like Russia.
- The RECHARGE Act would create a targeted permitting pathway for advanced nuclear reactors and associated transmission infrastructure located on brownfield sites and retired fossil fuel power plant sites.

Member Toplines:

Chair Cynthia Lummis (R-WY): Lummis argued that the U.S. must expand its reliable baseload power to support advanced manufacturing and digital infrastructure. She highlighted Wyoming's readiness to lead in uranium production and advanced nuclear projects. Lummis noted her support for the bills under consideration.

Ranking Member Mark Kelly (D-AZ): Kelly argued that outdated regulatory and licensing frameworks rather than technical limitations are slowing nuclear deployment. He called for the modernization of the NRC licensing process, while maintaining strong environmental oversight. Kelly also highlighted vulnerabilities in the U.S. nuclear fuel supply chain, including reliance on

imported enriched uranium from foreign adversaries. He highlighted his support for the bills under consideration.

Witness Toplines:

Nick Loris, President, C3 Solutions: Loris stressed that nuclear power is vital to meeting surging energy demand, but it must become cost-competitive. He supported all three bills, noting that allowing commercial-grade materials will break supply chain monopolies and streamlining environmental reviews will attract private capital to legacy energy communities.

Adam Stein, Director, Nuclear Energy Innovation, The Breakthrough Institute: Stein explained that while Congress has provided a mandate for modernization, the NRC must execute it effectively. He supported lowering material costs and streamlining environmental reviews for fuel facilities.

Patrick White, Group Leader For Fusion, Safety, and Regulation: White argued that predictable regulation is critical for investment. He supported modernizing materials standards and enrichment licensing. White expressed caution regarding the RECHARGE Act, suggesting that broad legislative categorical exclusions for environmental reviews might limit public engagement. He recommended targeted rulemaking instead.

Major Takeaways:

Nuclear Deployment and Permitting Reform

- Lummis and Kelly argued that rising electricity demand from artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing, data centers, and digital infrastructure requires significant expansion of reliable baseload power through advanced nuclear energy.
- Kelly emphasized that regulatory and licensing barriers rather than technological limitations are slowing nuclear deployment and increasing project costs.
- Lummis argued that redeveloping existing energy sites for advanced nuclear projects could attract private investment, restore local tax bases, and revitalize communities affected by fossil fuel plant closures.
- Sen. **Shelley Moore Capito** (R-WV) praised bipartisan implementation of the *ADVANCE Act* and thanked the NRC for being open to modernizing its licensing and oversight processes.
- Capito also emphasized the need to strengthen NRC workforce recruitment and retention to support anticipated growth in reactor construction and nuclear licensing.

Nuclear Construction and Advanced Reactor Deployment:

- Lummis argued the Build Nuclear with Local Materials Act would expand opportunities for local manufacturers, fabricators, and construction firms to participate in nuclear development projects.
- Lummis pointed to TerraPower's advanced reactor project in Wyoming as a model for repurposing brownfield energy sites for advanced nuclear development.

Uranium Supply Chain and Fuel Security:

- Kelly warned that the U.S. currently imports roughly 80 percent of its enriched uranium supply, including approximately 20 percent from Russia, creating significant energy and national security vulnerabilities.
- Lummis argued that while Wyoming possesses substantial uranium reserves and advanced in-situ mining capabilities, the U.S. lacks sufficient domestic enrichment and conversion capacity to support long-term nuclear growth.