



**BEN D. CROSS**  
**POPE COUNTY JUDGE**

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August 3, 2026

Joint Energy Committee  
Arkansas General Assembly  
Arkansas State Capitol  
500 Woodlane Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201

**RE: Expression of Interest for Nuclear Reactor Development – POPE COUNTY**

Dear Distinguished Members of the Joint Energy Committee,

Please accept this correspondence on behalf of Pope County, as our explicit interest and commitment to hosting development and expansion of nuclear energy in Arkansas. As home to the state's only two nuclear reactors, Pope County has literally been a "*nuclear community*" for over 50 years.

We have the nuclear workforce already in place. We have the engineering pipeline in place through our partners at Arkansas Tech University. We have emergency nuclear planning and response already in place and operational for over four decades, and most importantly, we have a population that is "*nuclear educated*." Instead of fearing nuclear development, our communities embrace nuclear energy and value its' benefits and economic impact.

As someone who has actually worked in both reactors previously, I feel I can speak first hand as to Pope County being the most ideally situated location in Arkansas for future nuclear development. Pope County is the only site in Arkansas with spent fuel available for the next generation of small modular reactors, (SMR's), and the infrastructure available to access the power grid, while also being conveniently located to river, rail, and interstate.

I join my colleagues in the private and public sector of the Arkansas River Valley in expressing not only our interest in development, but in your forward thinking to address Arkansas' energy needs head-on, and with open mindedness to the awesome benefits that nuclear energy can provide that no other energy source can compete with.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben D. Cross  
Pope County Judge

