State of Arkansas *As Engrossed: H3/19/25 H3/31/25 H4/2/25*
95th General Assembly **A Bill**
Regular Session, 2025 HOUSE BILL 1572

By: Representatives Ladyman, Unger, Beck, S. Meeks
By: Senators M. McKee, C. Penzo, Gilmore

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO CREATE A TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY STUDY ON NEW NUCLEAR ENERGY GENERATION; TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO CREATE A TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY STUDY ON NEW NUCLEAR ENERGY GENERATION; AND TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. TEMPORARY LANGUAGE.

(a) Within sixty (60) days after the effective date that this act is funded, the Department of Energy and Environment shall engage an outside consulting firm to conduct a technical feasibility study on implementing nuclear energy generation in this state.

(b) The consulting firm hired under subsection (a) of this section *shall be selected based on the extent to which the consulting firm meets the following criteria:*

(1) Be well-established in the nuclear industry;

(2) Have a large majority of United States nuclear operators as its customers;

(3) Have had nuclear licensing as its primary business for a substantial length of time;

(4) Be staffed with individuals who have knowledge and expertise in:

(A) Nuclear reactor design and operation;

(B) Studies of and expertise in the feasibilities of various nuclear reactor technologies and designs;

(C) Nuclear reactor licensing, regulation, and law; and

(D) Nuclear reactor siting; and

(5) Be neutral with regard to reactor technology and designs.

(c) Preference shall be given to a consulting firm that is managed by and owned in substantial part by military veterans with nuclear operating experience from the military veterans' time in military service.

(d) The feasibility study shall *determine:*

(1) The advantages and disadvantages of nuclear energy generation in this state, including without limitation the economic and environmental impact;

(2) Conclusions and recommendations on:

(A) Optimal design specifications based on site characteristics, possible industrial uses, and reactor technology maturity;

(B) Land and siting criteria, including specific areas such as data centers, existing energy facilities, military bases, and industrial activities requiring process heat that are best suited for new nuclear generation;

(C) Safety criteria required;

(D) Engineering services required;

(E) The feasibility of implementing all commercially licensable and available nuclear generation technologies, including small modular nuclear reactors and microreactors;

(F) Criteria for how well the technologies under subdivision (d)(2)(E) of this section are tested and if there are any cases of successful research or commercial operation of the technologies; and

(G) Site transportation and electric transmission capabilities;

(3) Socioeconomic assessment and impact analysis, including without limitation consideration of the impact on:

(A) Workforce education, training, and development;

(B) *The local* and state tax base;

(C) Supply chains; and

(D) Permanent and temporary job creation;

(4) The timeline for development, including areas of potential

acceleration or efficiencies and leveraging existing facilities within this state;

(5) Literature review of studies that have assessed the potential impact of nuclear energy generation in supporting an energy *transition;*

(6) Current and future policies that may be needed to support or accelerate the adoption of nuclear energy generation or may improve its cost-effectiveness, including a survey of federal programs and other methods that *could financially assist a nuclear project in this state; and*

(7) Through an evaluation by a third party, the technical accuracy and independence of the written report under subsection (f) of this section.

(e)(1) The consulting firm hired under subsection (a) of this section shall engage and consult with the Department of Energy and Environment, the investor-owned electric utilities, and the electric generation and transmission cooperatives in conducting the feasibility study.

(2) The Department of Energy and Environment, the investor-owned electric utilities, and the electric generation and transmission cooperatives shall cooperate in providing information to the consulting firm hired under subsection (a) of this section that is conducting the feasibility study as needed, subject to notification to the investor-owned electric utilities, and the electric generation and transmission cooperatives and reasonable safeguards under applicable state law, including without limitation § 23-2-316, to protect confidential information from being disclosed and made public.

(3) The consulting firm hired under subsection (a) of this section shall engage and consult with the Department of Energy and the Environment, the investor-owned electric utilities, the electric generation and transmission cooperative, and nuclear reactor and generating facility manufacturers in conducting the feasibility study to establish reasonable safeguards under state law to protect intellectual property and design criteria necessary for the study to protect confidential information and intellectual property from public disclosure.

(f) No later than fifteen (15) months after the effective date of this act, the *department* shall deliver a written report on the feasibility study to the:

(1) Governor;

(2) President Pro Tempore of the Senate;

(3) Majority leader of the Senate;

(4) Minority leader of the Senate;

(5) Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(6) Majority leader of the House of Representatives;

(7) Minority leader of the House of Representatives; and

(8) Chairpersons of the Joint Committee on Energy.

SECTION 2. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that there is not a continuous adequate supply of power to Arkansas citizens and businesses; that a technical feasibility study of new nuclear energy generation could provide valuable information as to how to maintain a continuous adequate supply of power to Arkansas citizens and businesses; and that this act is immediately necessary because maintaining a continuous adequate supply of power to Arkansas citizens and businesses is vital. Therefore, an emergency is declared to exist, and this act being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, and safety shall become effective on:

(1) The date of its approval by the Governor;

(2) If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor, the expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the bill; or

(3) If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is overridden, the date the last house overrides the veto.

/s/Ladyman