Global Laser Enrichment

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The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of Global Laser Enrichment (GLE), I am writing to endorse H.R. 4447, the Clean Economy Jobs and Innovation Act. H.R. 4447 incorporates H.R. 6097, the Nuclear Energy Research and Development Act, bipartisan legislation that the House Science, Space and Technology Committee advanced earlier this year. In addition, H.R. 4447 includes H.R. 1760, the Advanced Nuclear Fuel Availability Act. GLE urges the House to pass this important legislation.

GLE is working to develop, license, construct and operate next generation enrichment technology in the US. Laser technology offers advantages over centrifuge technology in potentially providing lower energy inputs, lower capital costs and lower tails assays. Work by GLE on developing this laser technology has been ongoing in the US since the 2000s, initially through a partnership with GE-Hitachi and Cameco and now through a restructuring expected to be finalized later this year with Cameco and Silex Systems Limited, the inventor of the technology. GLE is also partnering with the US Department of Energy (DOE) on re-enriching depleted uranium tails. In 2016, GLE and DOE entered into a contract under which GLE will purchase and re-enrich depleted uranium at a planned facility in Paducah, Kentucky. GLE is also involved in industry discussions on high assay low enriched uranium (HALEU), participating in a DOE workshop earlier this year on the issue.

Advanced reactors are an essential component of maintaining US leadership in the nuclear sector, along with providing a breakthrough non-emitting source of electricity. To secure the potential benefits of advanced reactors, the US needs to develop a viable and secure source of HALEU.

H.R. 4447 recognizes the importance of developing commercial HALEU sources. In particular, H.R. 4447 would establish a DOE research, development, demonstration and commercial program to make HALEU available for civilian advanced nuclear reactors. DOE would use a merit-based, competitive selection process in making any awards under this program.

GLE, with its flexible laser technology, could be an important option for DOE and the US industry as they work to develop a viable supply of HALEU to support advanced reactors. Market signals, however, are necessary to incentivize private investment in HALEU. H.R. 4447 would send a strong market signal of the US government's commitment to develop a domestic supply of HALEU that would encourage GLE and other industry stakeholders to develop this fuel to support advanced reactors. More broadly, H.R. 4447 provides important investments in advanced reactors that will help maintain and enhance US leadership in the nuclear industry, a sector that is essential to providing reliable and clean electricity generation to American businesses and families.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

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Thank you for your time and assistance to this important issue.

Regards,

Thomas Owens
President

Cc: House Science, Space and Technology Committee Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson
House Science, Space and Technology Committee Ranking Member Frank Lucas
House Energy Subcommittee Chairwoman Lizzie Fletcher
House Energy Subcommittee Ranking Member Randy Weber
Representative Connor Lamb
Representative Dan Newhouse