

Foundational Infrastructure for Responsible Use of Small Modular Reactor Technology (FIRST) Act

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The FIRST Act codifies the State Department's **Foundational Infrastructure for Responsible Use of Small Modular Reactor Technology** (FIRST) Program, ensuring the United States remains the partner of choice for countries pursuing advanced nuclear energy.

Key Points

- **Codifies the successful FIRST Program** to provide long-term certainty for partner countries and the U.S. civil nuclear industry.
- **Expands technical assistance** for partner countries on licensing, regulation, workforce development, and project planning.
- **Strengthens U.S. global competitiveness** by supporting American nuclear exports and countering state-backed competitors.

The Problem

- **Need for Durable U.S. Leadership**: Since 2021, the FIRST Program has operated through executive authority alone. Without congressional authorization, the program lacks the long-term certainty that partner countries and U.S. industry need.
- **Strategic Competition**: Russia and China are aggressively using civil nuclear exports to expand their geopolitical influence. The United States must remain a credible long-term partner for allies and emerging nuclear nations.
- **Supporting American Industry**: U.S. companies developing advanced reactors need strong diplomatic engagement and technical assistance programs that help countries choose American technologies over foreign competitors.

What the FIRST Act does:

- **Authorizes the FIRST Program** within the Department of State and promotes responsible deployment of advanced nuclear energy.
- **Provides technical assistance** on licensing, legal and regulatory frameworks, energy planning, workforce development, engineering support, and grid integration.
- **Enhances congressional oversight** through required reports and annual briefings on program implementation, partnerships, industry engagement, and expenditures.

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