Domestic Low Enriched Uranium Supply Chain

Uranium hexafluoride gas container.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is working to expand domestic commercial low enriched uranium (LEU) enrichment capabilities to support the fuel supply for our nation's fleet of nuclear reactors. This expansion will promote diversity in the LEU market and provide a reliable supply of commercial nuclear fuel critical to U.S. clean energy and energy security goals.

How it Works

DOE selected 6 companies that will compete for future work to supply LEU, fostering strong commercial sector investment. The companies include:

- **American Centrifuge Operating, LLC**
- **General Matter, Inc.**
- **Global Laser Enrichment, LLC**
- **Louisiana Energy Services, LLC**
- **Laser Isotope Separation Technologies, Inc.**
- **Orano Federal Services, LLC**

Developing domestic capacity for LEU ensures an adequate fuel supply is available from trusted sources to maintain the current fleet of U.S. reactors and builds a strong base to supply future deployments of advanced nuclear reactors both at home and abroad.

Through these contracts, DOE will acquire LEU generated by new domestic sources—either at entirely new enrichment facilities or from projects that expand their existing capacity. All contracts will last for up to 10 years and each awardee receives a minimum contract of $2 million.

Why it's Needed

Nuclear energy is poised to play a critical role in the nation's transition to clean energy. It provides economic opportunity and good-paying American jobs in communities across the country and is readily available to improve the reliability and resilience of our power system.

Nuclear energy provides almost 20% of our nation's electricity and is the single largest source of clean energy that can meet fast-growing electricity demand and decarbonize hard-to-abate industrial processes and the transportation sector.

At COP 28, the United States co-led a pledge alongside 25 countries to triple globally installed nuclear energy capacity by 2050. To meet this pledge, the United States would need to deploy additional nuclear energy capacity. This includes new reactors of all sizes, including large reactors, small modular reactors, and microreactors. We will also need to keep our existing nuclear reactors online, add more capacity through power uprates, and restart recently retired units. This expansion will require a stable source of uranium to fuel the reactors.

Russia currently has about 44% of the world's uranium enrichment capacity and supplies approximately 35% of U.S. imports for nuclear fuel. On May 13, 2024, President Biden signed into law a ban on Russian LEU imports that goes into effect on August 11, 2024.

To ensure U.S. nuclear power plants do not experience disruptions, DOE released a process that allows the Secretary of Energy, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Commerce, to grant a waiver to an importer for specified quantities of Russian LEU under certain circumstances.

Any waiver under this provision will terminate not later than January 1, 2028.

This RFP is intended to spur additional domestic LEU enrichment capacity consistent with these requirements to reduce use of Russian nuclear fuel and ensure LEU demand is met through trusted sources.

Relevant Links

- DOE Announces $2.7 Billion From President Biden's Investing in America Agenda to Boost Domestic Nuclear Fuel Supply Chain | Department of Energy
- LEU RFP link
- Russian Uranium Ban Will Speed up Development of U.S. Nuclear Fuel Supply Chain | Department of Energy
- 4 Crucial Steps the Biden-Harris Administration is Taking to Secure a Nuclear Fuel Supply Chain | Department of Energy

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