SJR89

3PUG3ZV-2

By Senator Stutts

RFD: Rules

First Read: 17-Mar-26

Enrolled, An Act,

SJR___ URGING THE GOVERNOR AND RELEVANT STATE AGENCIES TO RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL AND TAKE STATE ACTIONS TOWARD ITS DEVELOPMENT.

WHEREAS, the State of Alabama has had two large nuclear power facilities for many years, the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant near Athens, Alabama, and the Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Generating Plant near Dothan, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, the operation of these plants has produced substantial quantities of spent nuclear fuel (SNF) that is currently stored on-site at both facilities; and

WHEREAS, Alabama ratepayers have paid a tax of one dollar per megawatt-hour from the energy generated by these two plants, which has gone into a federal Nuclear Waste Fund to develop a geologic repository for the permanent disposal of this spent nuclear fuel, pursuant to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982; and

WHEREAS, there is no federal effort underway to develop a permanent geologic repository for spent nuclear fuel; and

WHEREAS, spent nuclear fuel contains several categories of materials of varying economic value, enormous energy potential, and long-term radiological hazard; and

WHEREAS, the short-term concerns (on the order of decades) around the radiotoxicity of spent nuclear fuel are

dominated by fission products that decay quickly and can no longer undergo fission to release energy; and

WHEREAS, the long-term concerns (on the order of thousands of years) about the radiotoxicity of spent nuclear fuel are dominated by transuranic materials that still have the potential to undergo fission to release energy, which would transform them into short-term fission products; and

WHEREAS, the uranium that makes up the majority of the spent nuclear fuel has very little radioactivity and has undergone little change in the reactor beyond a depletion of its fissile content, and is suitable for recycle or disposal as low-level waste, not requiring the complexity and expense of a geologic repository, so long as it is sufficiently decontaminated from fission products and transuranics; and

WHEREAS, the economics of our national uranium supply have continued to degrade, both as a consequence of long-term under-investment as well as over-reliance on foreign suppliers, including adversarial nations such as Russia; and

WHEREAS, increasingly high costs for conventional nuclear power puts at risk the continued operation of the Browns Ferry and Farley plants; and

WHEREAS, the aging infrastructure of both of these facilities also leads to strong concerns about the status of their sites, their spent nuclear fuel storage, and the economic impact to the local communities if and when their operators elect to decommission these plants at some point in the future; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Energy (DOE) issued a Request for Information (RFI) seeking expressions of interest from states to host Nuclear Lifecycle Innovation Campuses (NLICs) as voluntary federal-state partnerships to modernize the full nuclear fuel cycle, strengthen U.S. leadership in advanced nuclear energy, drive economic growth, create jobs, enhance energy security, and support advanced reactors, fuel fabrication, enrichment, used fuel reprocessing and recycling, waste disposition, manufacturing, power generation, and related infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, recent studies have been undertaken in the state that point to the potential to use the materials in spent nuclear fuel as fuel sources in advanced reactors that avoid conventional fuel fabrication by the use of liquid fuel; and

WHEREAS, these studies have been key in the announced award of federal funds to the Alabama team of Flibe Energy, Inc., Alabama A&M University (AAMU), and Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) to continue to develop an approach to recycle spent nuclear fuel into new liquid fuel suitable for these locally-developed, advanced reactors; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That:

(1) The Legislature strongly supports using existing spent nuclear fuel resources in Alabama as a future energy resource.

(2) The Legislature strongly supports responding to the DOE request for information around NLIC sites in Alabama or participating in regional efforts, and urges the Governor, in coordination with relevant state agencies - including the Alabama Department of Workforce Development and the Alabama Public Service Commission - to prepare and submit a response by April 1, 2026 (or prepare for future opportunities if more strategic), outlining Alabama's interest in recycling spent fuel into new liquid fuels for advanced reactors, potential legacy site use, regional collaboration, and partnership framework.

(3) The Governor and relevant agencies are further urged to emphasize in any such response how selection could unlock future federal funding for universities, small businesses, workforce programs, and related nuclear innovation, and to engage Alabama industry partners, utilities, research institutions, workforce providers, and communities in developing the proposal, considering regional approaches and potential state support mechanisms contingent on federal selection and appropriations.

(4) The Governor and relevant agencies recognize efforts at Alabama A&M University to advance a Center for Nuclear Science and Engineering (CNSE) to become a nuclear center of excellence with notable emphasis in liquid fuel reactor technologies, intended to complement AAMU's recent selection as a strategic leader in Alabama developing technologies to support artificial intelligence and data centers.

(5) Copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor of Alabama, the U.S. Secretary of Energy, the Alabama congressional delegation, and appropriate legislative committees.

(6) This resolution take effect immediately upon passage and approval by the Governor, or upon becoming law.

President and Presiding Officer of the Senate

Speaker of the House of Representatives

SJR89
Senate 17-Mar-26
I hereby certify that the within Act originated in and passed the Senate.

Patrick Harris,
Secretary.

House of Representatives
Passed: 31-Mar-26

By: Senator Stutts