



# ARE WE GETTING MORE SERIOUS ABOUT NUCLEAR ENERGY? LET'S HOPE SO - INSIDE SOURCES

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An overwhelming [majority](#) of House members recently voted in favor of the [Atomic Energy Advancement Act](#), a bipartisan bill to boost nuclear energy capacity. The legislation's goals include speeding up the environmental review process and reducing licensure fees. In other words, curtailing some red tape prohibiting nuclear projects from advancing.

The introduction and passage of this bill is a most welcome development. Often seen as dangerous or even deadly, nuclear power has long been stigmatized and castigated as the pariah of the energy industry. But this couldn't be further from the truth.

Globally, nuclear energy is responsible for far [fewer fatalities](#) than any other source of power except solar, which wins by a slim margin. Nuclear power has a rate of 0.07 deaths per terawatt-hour, which is significantly lower than the closest fossil fuel competitor, natural gas at 2.82. The U.S. death rate is zero. In fact, the well-known 1979 [Three Mile Island Incident](#) resulted in no discernible health concerns.

As the most reliable energy source, nuclear energy's performance and efficiency are unmatched. Based on [capacity factors](#), you would need almost two coal or three to four renewable plants to generate the same amount of electricity onto the grid.

The Department of Energy's website [touts](#) nuclear energy as "America's workhorse" because nuclear-power plants produce maximum power more than 92 percent of the time; wind and solar have only 35 percent and 25 percent maximum-power capacity, respectively.

[Nuclear power](#) provides 20 percent of all electricity in the United States. It accounts for more than half the nation's carbon-free energy. The public is warming up to the idea of more nuclear.

According to Pew Research, [a majority](#) of Americans (57 percent) say they favor more nuclear power plants to generate electricity, up from 43 percent in 2020.

It's also gaining in popularity globally. One-and-a-half times more people support the use of nuclear energy than oppose it, a [multinational public opinion poll](#) conducted in January found. This is partly attributed to COP28's pledge to triple global nuclear capacity by 2050.

More than two dozen world leaders at the December climate conference agreed to meet for a first-time nuclear energy summit in Brussels. At that [summit](#), government leaders from participating countries were given "the opportunity to share their vision on the key role of nuclear power ... including national plans to fully exploit its potential."

Several nations have already changed course regarding their commitment to nuclear energy.

Sweden [surprised](#) many last summer with an announcement to reinvest in nuclear power, effectively reversing a decades-old decision to phase it out. Finance Minister Elisabeth Svantesson stated, "We need more electricity production...and we need a stable energy system."

France also flipped on its commitment to nuclear power. [About 70 percent](#) of France's energy needs are supplied by nuclear power, far outperforming any other country. Earlier plans to reduce reliance on nuclear energy were postponed and then finally scrapped last year.

The [United Kingdom](#) is also exploring plans to build a large-scale nuclear plant, the biggest expansion of the nuclear sector in 70 years. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak called nuclear power the "perfect antidote to the energy challenges facing Britain."

The United States needs to recommit to its nuclear power priorities. As the world leader in nuclear energy production, we have [93 nuclear reactors](#) at 54 power plants. While peaking at [112 reactors](#) in 1990, several have shut down, either due to retirement or pressure from environmental groups. Only [four](#) plants have emerged in three decades.

Electricity demand in the United States is projected to increase by [1 percent](#) annually through 2050. It would be prudent to incorporate the most dependable energy source on the market by ramping up its overall contribution. We certainly can't rely on wind and solar; as an advanced society, we should not toy with unreliable and intermittent energy sources.

If we are serious about curbing the use of fossil fuels, nuclear energy must be part of the equation because it will help provide what consumers depend upon to take care of their families and run their businesses. The Atomic Energy Advancement Act is a step in the right direction.