

The Trump Administration Issues Executive Orders Addressing Nuclear Energy

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AUTHORS

Eric Pogue | S. Kris Agarwal | Norman C. Bay | Archie Fallon
Andrew Thomison | Rishika Nallapareddy | Jacob Bell

For previous alerts in this series on nuclear energy, please see: [*Tax Credit Opportunities for Nuclear Energy*](#), [*Financing Nuclear Projects in the U.S. – Considerations in the Current Market Environment*](#), [*Nuclear Energy – Growth and Transactional Opportunities*](#), and [*Another Nuclear Renaissance*](#). Willkie continues to review the evolving nuclear landscape and will be publishing additional alerts and insights.

On Friday afternoon, May 23, 2025, President Donald J. Trump signed into law four Executive Orders that intend to boost the nuclear energy sector in the United States. Below is a non-exhaustive summary of each of the Executive Orders.

1. “Reinvigorating the Nuclear Industrial Base”

This Executive Order¹ aims to revitalize the United States’ nuclear energy sector. Highlighting the urgency with which the nation must address its lagging nuclear capacity and lack of true energy independence, this Executive

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/05/reinvigorating-the-nuclear-industrial-base/>

Order includes a mandate for a comprehensive strategy to (i) reinforce nuclear fuel production and management, (ii) bolster the nuclear energy workforce and (iii) prioritize funding for restarting, completing and constructing nuclear plants, with the goal of achieving 5GW of power uprates and initiating construction of “10 new large reactors with complete designs” by 2030. The Department of Energy will spearhead coordination.

2. “Reforming Nuclear Reactor Testing at the Department of Energy”

This Executive Order² aims to revitalize the United States’ deployment of advanced nuclear technologies. Focusing on addressing stagnation in such deployment and emphasizing the need for a reliable and diversified energy stack, this Executive Order places a mandate on the Department of Energy to (i) reform its processes to streamline the review and deployment of advanced reactors, including “microreactors, small modular reactors, and Generation III+ and IV reactors”, (ii) establish a pilot program for the construction and operation of reactors “outside the National Laboratories”, with a goal of achieving criticality in three reactors by July 4, 2026 and (iii) streamline review pursuant to environmental laws.

3. “Ordering the Reform of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission”

This Executive Order³ aims to overhaul the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the “NRC”) and to expedite the deployment of advanced nuclear technologies and reestablish the United States’ energy leadership. This Executive Order seeks to reform the NRC’s culture, structure and regulations. The central initiatives concern restructuring the NRC for the purposes of streamlining licensing, adopting “science-based radiation limits” and streamlining environmental review. The Executive Order also requires the NRC to establish a team dedicated to drafting the regulations required by the Executive Order.

4. “Deploying Advanced Nuclear Reactor Technologies for National Security”

This Executive Order⁴ aims to accelerate the development and deployment of advanced nuclear technologies in an effort to bolster national security interests and energy independence and resilience. The Executive Order includes a mandate for (i) the Secretary of Defense to establish a program for the use of nuclear energy, which shall include the “operation of a nuclear reactor, regulated by the United States Army, at a domestic military base or installation no later than September 30, 2028”, (ii) the Department of Energy to create AI data centers “located at or operated in coordination with Department of Energy facilities”, (iii) the Department of Energy’s issuance of guidelines for the careful management of rare earth minerals such as uranium and plutonium within the Department of Energy’s supply chain, (iv) the Secretary of State to enact programs promoting and regulating the export of nuclear energy and (v) the Department of Defense to prioritize the issuance of security clearances related to nuclear energy.

² <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/05/reforming-nuclear-reactor-testing-at-the-department-of-energy/>

³ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/05/ordering-the-reform-of-the-nuclear-regulatory-commission/>

⁴ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/05/deploying-advanced-nuclear-reactor-technologies-for-national-security/>

If you have any questions regarding this client alert, please contact the following attorneys or the Willkie attorney with whom you regularly work.

Eric Pogue

212 728 8035
epogue@willkie.com

S. Kris Agarwal

713 510 1778
kagarwal@willkie.com

Norman C. Bay

202 303 1155
nbay@willkie.com

Archie Fallon

713 510 1775
afallon@willkie.com

Andrew Thomison

713 510 1776
athomison@willkie.com

Rishika Nallapareddy

212 728 3046
rnallapareddy@willkie.com

Jacob Bell

713 510 1752
jbell@willkie.com



BRUSSELS CHICAGO DALLAS FRANKFURT HOUSTON LONDON LOS ANGELES MILAN
MUNICH NEW YORK PALO ALTO PARIS ROME SAN FRANCISCO WASHINGTON

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