



ADVANCED NUCLEAR ENERGY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, June 16, 2026
Roughrider Room, State Capitol
Bismarck, North Dakota

Senator Dale Patten, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Members present: Senators Dale Patten, Cole Conley, Claire Cory, David Hogue, Tim Mathern*; Representatives Dick Anderson, Macy Bolinske, Ben Koppelman, Alisa Mitskog, SuAnn Olson, Mike Schatz, Don Vigesaa; Citizen Members Pam Gorman Prochaska, Reice Haase, Sheri Haugen-Hoffart, Claire Vigesaa

Member absent: Citizen Member Gavin McCollam

Others present: Senators Brad Bekkedahl and Janne Myrdal, members of the Legislative Management

William Bridge, Nucleon Energy Inc.; Sandy Fazeli* and Kirsten Verclas,* National Association of State Energy Officials; Don Hancock,* Southwest Research and Information Center; Nancy Hodur, North Dakota State University; Edward C. Murphy, Department of Mineral Resources

See [Appendix A](#) for additional persons present.

**Attended remotely*

It was moved by Representative Anderson, seconded by Representative Bolinske, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the April 21-22, 2026, meeting be approved as distributed.

Mr. William Bridge, Co-Founder and Chief Technology Officer, Nucleon Energy Inc., presented information ([Appendix B](#)) regarding an interim report ([Appendix C](#)) related to advanced nuclear technology. He noted the report includes:

- Information regarding the range of advanced nuclear technologies, including an assessment of comparative maturity and deployment readiness of the technologies.
- Potential uses for the technologies that support reliability, industry, and economic development in the state.
- Fuel needs and waste considerations across advanced nuclear technologies.

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. Bridge noted developing a supply chain for high-assay low-enriched uranium will be essential for successful advanced reactor deployment.

Ms. Sandy Fazeli, Senior Managing Director, and Ms. Kirsten Verclas, Senior Managing Director, National Association of State Energy Officials, presented information ([Appendix D](#)) regarding state-level policy and legislation related to advanced nuclear energy in other states. They noted:

- The National Association of State Energy Officials is a nonprofit association for governor-designated energy officials from each of the 56 states and territories and serves as a resource for state energy offices.

- Industry and stakeholder input indicated waste management and workforce and supply chain readiness should be part of early conversations related to advanced nuclear energy development.
- State legislation and executive orders related to advanced nuclear energy include task forces, pilot programs, roadmaps, nuclear moratorium repeals, new state structures, and nuclear reactor site readiness programs.

Ms. Sheri Haugen-Hoffart, Public Service Commissioner, presented information ([Appendix E](#)) regarding the Public Service Commission's perspective on its potential regulatory role in relation to possible advanced nuclear development in the state. She noted:

- The commission's statutory and regulatory framework for certificates of public convenience and necessity could be applied to nuclear power, but may require modifications specific to nuclear investments.
- The commission's energy facility siting authority may require legislative review because advanced nuclear facilities raise issues that may not be contemplated by traditional siting statutes.
- Due in large part to the high cost associated with development and deployment of nuclear technology, the commission's ratemaking authority may become one of the most significant areas of involvement if advanced nuclear development occurs in the state.

In response to questions from committee members, Ms. Haugen-Hoffart noted the Public Service Commission is not authorized to regulate a nuclear plant that operates off the transmission grid and is colocated with a large energy user like a data center.

Mr. David Stradinger, Manager, Radiation Control Program, Department of Environmental Quality, presented information ([Appendix F](#)) regarding the department's perspective on its potential administrative role in relation to possible advanced nuclear development in the state. He noted:

- North Dakota became an agreement state in 1969, and as a part of that agreement, the regulatory authority over certain radioactive materials was transferred from the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to the state.
- The NRC defines two emergency planning zones around each nuclear power plant and the size and configuration of the zones vary based on local emergency response needs and other factors such as population, land characteristics, access routes, and jurisdictional boundaries.
- New nuclear technologies bring uncertainty and may require additional emergency response planning, state involvement, and regulation alongside the NRC.

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. Stradinger noted the department will better gauge future regulatory and resource needs as technology progresses and other states deploy reactors.

Mr. Darin Hanson, Director, Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Department of Emergency Services, presented information regarding the department's perspective on its potential administrative role in relation to possible advanced nuclear development in the state. He noted to prepare for nuclear development in the state:

- The department anticipates developing a radiological emergency preparedness program, including training, coordinating with other state agencies and first responders, developing plans and procedures to respond to potential incidents, and collaborating on policy development with other agencies.
- The department would need to be aware of and comply with Federal Emergency Management Agency requirements and provide education to the public, which may require additional staff resources.

In response to a question from a committee member, Mr. Hanson noted the extent to which industry should contribute to costs associated with emergency preparedness is a policy decision.

Mr. Reice Haase, Director, Department of Water Resources, presented information ([Appendix G](#)) regarding the department's perspective on its potential administrative or regulatory role in relation to possible advanced nuclear development in the state. He provided an overview of the prior appropriation doctrine for management of water rights and the water permit application process and noted:

- The state has over 60 million acre feet of ground water in its aquifers, but based on existing demand and permits issued, ground water is unlikely to be a viable option to support nuclear energy needs.
- Water planning is vital to the siting of nuclear facilities, and the Missouri River offers the best-available water source in the state, with an average annual flow of 16.7 million acre feet per year.
- The department does not anticipate any statutory changes or budget adjustments will be necessary to accommodate advanced nuclear energy development in the state.

Mr. Jordan Kannianen, Deputy Executive Director, Industrial Commission, presented information ([Appendix H](#)) regarding the Clean Sustainable Energy Authority Grant Program and the Renewable Energy Program. He noted:

- The Clean Sustainable Energy Fund has a cash balance of just over \$17.8 million, with approximately \$10.3 million in uncommitted cash available.
- The Renewable Energy Program may be relevant to advanced nuclear development, but legislative changes may be necessary to use the program for nuclear projects.
- The Industrial Commission does not have a position on the commission's potential future administrative involvement in advanced nuclear development in the state.

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. Kannianen noted the High-Level Radioactive Waste Council is being reviewed by another committee for potential adjustments.

Mr. Kelvin Hullet, Chief Public Affairs Officer, Bank of North Dakota, presented information ([Appendix I](#)) regarding existing loan and other financing programs available through the Bank of North Dakota, which may support potential advanced nuclear energy development in the state. He noted:

- The Bank and the state have limited ability to support very large-scale projects, such as those exceeding \$2 billion.
- Bank financing programs that could support advanced nuclear energy development in the state may include the Match Program, a joint structure between a loan program and the North Dakota Development Fund, and in-state investments under the Legacy Fund.

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. Hullet noted the scale of investment necessary for an advanced nuclear project would require legislative input and direction.

Dr. Nancy Hodur, Director, Center for Social Research, North Dakota State University, presented information ([Appendix J](#)) regarding best practices and approaches to community engagement for evaluating social interests and community acceptance of potential siting locations for energy projects, including advanced nuclear energy projects. She noted best practices include:

- Coordinating and engaging with community leaders, industry representatives, and other stakeholders.
- Transparent, unbiased communication supported by multiple outreach and data collection methods.

In response to questions from committee members, Dr. Hodur noted the Center for Social Research frequently collaborates with the North Dakota State University Extension Service for research projects.

Mr. Edward C. Murphy, State Geologist, Department of Mineral Resources, presented information ([Appendix K](#)) regarding exploration and mining of uranium and critical minerals in the state, which may support potential advanced nuclear energy development, including historical mining efforts and the feasibility of future mining opportunities. He noted:

- The first reported widespread uranium exploration in the state took place in 1948 and 1949.
- Most mining took place between 1962 and 1967, and mining efforts were primarily in Billings County.
- 9 to 14 uranium mines operated in the state between the 1950s and 1967.

Mr. Bridge presented information ([Appendix L](#)) regarding a final report ([Appendix M](#)) related to the committee's study of the feasibility, siting, and deployment of advanced nuclear power plants in the state, incorporating findings from the following companion reports presented during the course of the interim:

- Siting and land use report.
- Economic impacts and private sector financing report.
- Nuclear waste storage assessment report.
- Small modular reactor technology assessment report.

Mr. Bridge noted:

- Policy and governance themes for committee consideration include waste boundary and state protection considerations, tax treatment review, and clarification of agency roles and coordination.
- The Public Service Commission, Department of Environmental Quality, and Industrial Commission are the agencies most likely to interface with future advanced nuclear energy proposals.
- North Dakota can continue to evaluate future opportunities while preserving flexibility regarding technology choices, project timing, and future policy decisions.
- Nucleon Energy Inc.'s findings indicate the state does not need to decide now whether to pursue advanced nuclear projects, but maintaining readiness would allow evaluation of future proposals if development interest emerges.

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. Bridge noted:

- The state is in a good starting place to consider the role of advanced nuclear energy in the state.
- The most significant barrier to advanced nuclear energy development is the state's general prohibition on high-level radioactive waste storage.
- The state could either wait for a future project to prompt more specific legislation on agency readiness or begin the work proactively over the next few years to allow more time for discussion and planning.

Mr. Jayson Needham, Pembina, presented information ([Appendix N](#)) regarding nuclear fission.

Mr. Mirek Petrovic, Member, High-Level Radioactive Waste Advisory Council, provided comments ([Appendix O](#)) related to the committee's study of advanced nuclear energy. He noted fundamental factors that should be addressed before modifying laws governing nuclear energy and high-level radioactive waste storage include the:

- High cost of nuclear technologies relative to other power sources.
- Absence of a current need for nuclear energy given the state's reliable energy surplus.
- Importance of community consent before selection of a host community for a nuclear project.

Mr. Don Hancock, Director of Nuclear Waste and Administrator, Southwest Research and Information Center, provided comments regarding the committee's study of advanced nuclear energy. He noted:

- Concerns regarding potential health effects associated with uranium mining and processing, including effects related to contamination of abandoned uranium mines in air, land, and water.
- A small modular reactor would become a long-term storage site after ceasing operation unless a permanent, long-term storage site is identified.
- New Mexico's legislative experience related to nuclear energy development may be relevant to the committee's discussion.

Senator Tim Mathern presented a proposed bill draft [\[27.0180.01000\]](#) to provide an appropriation to the North Dakota State University Extension Service for an advanced nuclear energy education and community engagement initiative grant program and related information ([Appendix P](#)).

Committee members noted:

- Additional legislative proposals may be considered at the next meeting.
- Federal policy often impacts state-level energy decisions and economic considerations are important when evaluating potential energy projects.
- Changing state law would not necessarily indicate the state is ready for nuclear energy development, but could allow further exploration of the potential for nuclear energy in the state.
- It is important to consider how the public may perceive a proposal to remove the state's general prohibition on high-level radioactive waste storage.

No further business appearing, Chairman Patten adjourned the meeting at 3:52 p.m.

Megan J. Gordon
Code Revisor

ATTACH:16