Bill Gates’ nuclear energy startup inks new data center deal



TerraPower, a nuclear energy startup founded by Bill Gates, struck a deal this week with one of the largest data center developers in the US to deploy advanced nuclear reactors. TerraPower and Sabey Data Centers (SDC) are working together on a plan to run existing and future facilities on nuclear energy from small reactors.

Tech companies are scrambling to determine where to get all the electricity they’ll need for energy-hungry AI data centers that are putting growing pressure on power grids. They’re increasingly turning to nuclear energy, including next-generation reactors that startups like TerraPower are developing.

“The energy sector is transforming at an unprecedented pace.”

“The energy sector is transforming at an unprecedented pace after decades of business as usual, and meaningful progress

will require strategic collaboration across industries," TerraPower President and CEO Chris Levesque said in a press release.

A memorandum of understanding signed by the two companies establishes a "strategic collaboration" that'll initially look into the potential for new nuclear power plants in Texas and the Rocky Mountain region that would power SDC's data centers.

There's still a long road ahead before that can become a reality. The technology TerraPower and similar nuclear energy startups are developing still have to make it through regulatory hurdles and prove that they can be commercially viable.

Compared to older, larger nuclear power plants, the next generation of reactors are supposed to be smaller and easier to site. Nuclear energy is seen as an alternative to fossil fuels that are causing climate change. But it still faces opposition from some advocates concerned about the impact of uranium mining and storing radioactive waste near communities.

"I'm a big believer that nuclear energy can help us solve the climate problem, which is very, very important. There are designs that, in terms of their safety or fuel use or how they handle waste, I think, minimize those problems," Gates told *The Verge* last year.

TerraPower's reactor design for this collaboration, Natrium, is the only advanced technology of its kind with a construction permit application for a commercial reactor pending with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, according to the company. The company just broke ground on a demonstration project in Wyoming last year, and expects it to come online in 2030.

Microsoft made a deal in September to help restart a retired reactor at Three Mile Island. Both Google and Amazon, meanwhile, announced plans last year to support the

development of advanced reactors to power their data centers.

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