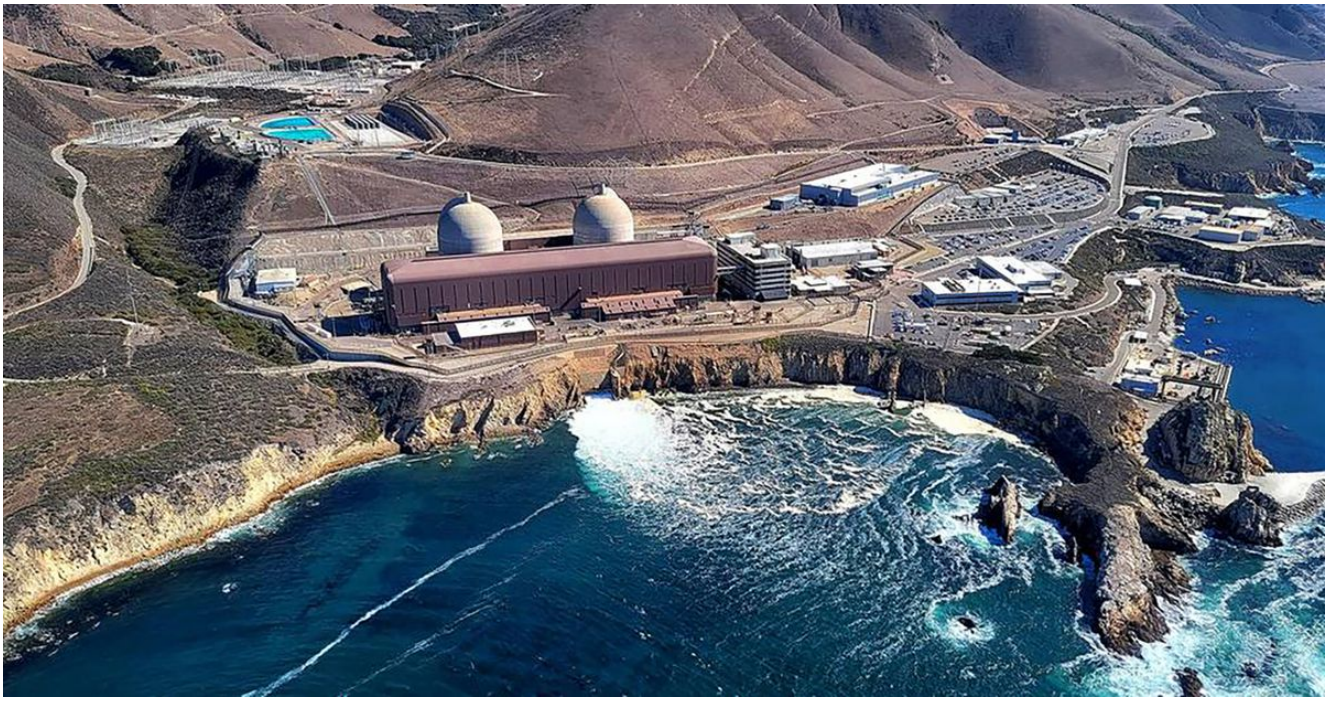
# Congress votes to advance nuclear energy development in the US



Congress has passed a bill aimed at giving nuclear energy a boost in the US. The Accelerating Deployment of Versatile, Advanced Nuclear for Clean Energy (ADVANCE) Act is now waiting for President Joe Biden’s signature to become law. The Senate passed the bill on Tuesday, after the House of Representatives passed a similar bill in February.

The bill is supposed to speed up development of next-generation nuclear reactors and position the US to lead the international market, while also helping aging reactors stay online. Nuclear energy is still a divisive solution for reducing greenhouse gas emissions causing climate change, but it has gained bipartisan support in recent years.

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The ADVANCE Act directs the Department of Energy (DOE) to

streamline its process for approving the international export of American nuclear energy technology and cut down regulatory costs for companies trying to license advanced nuclear reactors. It creates incentives for successfully deploying those technologies, and tasks the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) with creating a “timely” pathway for licensing small reactors at brownfields and former fossil fuel generator sites. It also seeks to accelerate licensing review for new reactors at existing nuclear sites and streamline the environmental review process.

The legislation has already elicited strong reactions from environmental groups that either support or oppose nuclear energy. On one hand, nuclear power is seen as a way to supplement fluctuating renewables like solar and wind energy with a steady source of energy that doesn’t generate planet-heating carbon dioxide emissions.

“As we continue to decarbonize our nation’s energy system and address growing energy demand, we need all options available and nuclear energy will play an important role in making sure we are able to meet these challenges,” Evan Chapman, US federal policy director at Clean Air Task Force, said in an emailed statement.

“Make no mistake: This is not about making the reactor licensing process more efficient, but about weakening safety and security oversight across the board, a longstanding industry goal,” Edwin Lyman, nuclear power safety director at the Union of Concerned Scientists said in a statement about the ADVANCE Act this week ahead of its passage.

https://www.theverge.com/2024/6/19/24181808/congress-pass-nuclear-energy-bill-biden-signature