

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 16, 2018

Honorable Wilbur Ross, Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Secretary Ross:

We write today to reiterate the concerns raised by the uranium industry in their Section 232 petition requesting that the Commerce Department investigate the effects of uranium imports, particularly from foreign state-owned firms, on America's national security. The national security risks of foreign dependence on uranium merit an expedited investigation and effective response. The proposed uranium trade policy adjustments in the Section 232 petition align with the administration's efforts to promote energy independence and American jobs and decrease dependence on foreign critical minerals.

While the United States was once a global leader in uranium production, domestic uranium concentrate production is on track to hit the lowest level since 1952. The domestic uranium industry currently supplies less than five percent of our domestic uranium needs, leaving the United States dependent on foreign sources—largely from Russia and Kazakhstan—for a mineral that is a critical component of our electric grid and our national security.

This is not due to lack of resources; the Department of Energy estimates the United States uranium industry has the capacity to provide sixty percent of domestic fuel requirements. Yet despite these vast uranium deposits, we are now on the verge of losing our domestic uranium mining, our only conversion facility, and our only enrichment facility. The uranium industry has lost over half of its workforce over the past five years and market prices remain well below average production costs largely due to state-sponsored foreign producers who undermine our market.

In addition to losing an economic engine that is vital to our states and many of our local economies, there are severe national security implications to current uranium trade imports. The heavy dependence on foreign sources for the fuel powering our commercial reactors that produce 20% of our electric grid power puts the reliability of our critical infrastructure at risk. By ceding leadership in high-tech nuclear technologies, we also are giving other nations a clear advantage in making future nuclear advances and in determining international parameters for safety, security, and nonproliferation.

A robust domestic uranium industry is also critical for our long-term national security strategy. U.S. uranium is a critical component of the U.S. nuclear arsenal and the strategic deterrence mission that has kept our nation safe for nearly 75 years. U.S.-mined uranium is also used to power our submarines and aircraft carriers that are the backbone of the Navy fleet. These key defense purposes highlight why U.S. uranium should be utilized. Preventing foreign competition from undermining American uranium producers is therefore essential to meet our long-term national security needs.

Given these pressing national security and critical infrastructure implications, we support the uranium industry's Section 232 petition and respectfully urge the Department of Commerce to give it quick, full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,



Steve Pearce
Member of Congress



Liz Cheney
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



Paul Gosar
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Scott Tipton
Member of Congress

CC: Secretary Perry (DOE)
Secretary Mattis (DOD)
Under Secretary Ricardel (DOC, BIS)