From: PSC Public Comment
To: Lane Boldman
Subject: RE: Public Comments- PSC case 2025-00186
Date: Wednesday, April 22, 2026 9:31:00 AM

Case No. 2025-00186

Thank you for your comments on the application of Electronic Investigation of Nuclear Energy, Generation, Storage, and Related Matters. Your comments in the above-referenced matter have been received and will be placed into the case file for the Commission's consideration. Please cite the case number in this matter, 2025-00186 in any further correspondence. The documents in this case are available at View Case Filings for: 2025-00186 (ky.gov).

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

From: Lane Boldman [redacted]
Sent: Monday, April 20, 2026 1:21 PM
To: PSC Public Comment <PSC.Comment@ky.gov>
Subject: Public Comments- PSC case 2025-00186

[redacted]

Please see attached public comments for case 2025-00186, Nuclear Energy. Thank you.

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KCC: Join or Donate

Kentucky Conservation Committee

Established 1975

Case No. 2025-00186

March 25, 2026

My name is Lane Boldman, I am Director of the Kentucky Conservation Committee – a policy nonprofit in Frankfort, Kentucky. I wish to comment on PSC Case Number 2025-00186.

In 2023, I was one of several participants in the state's Nuclear Energy Development Working Group, formed by Senate Joint Resolution 79, to identify the barriers to the deployment of nuclear power generation and related technologies. While we identified that there were no insurmountable barriers, that does not mean that there are not significant concerns regarding a focus on nuclear energy advancement at this point in time.

"Advanced" Nuclear: While we have certainly made advances in reactor design and handling of fuel, we still need to consider that this technology is still largely novel and not well tested over time. Many of the problems with nuclear energy remain such as storage of waste and cost. Smaller reactor designs create more nuclear waste per megawatt. When I served on the Nuclear Energy Development Working Group, there was much discussion about advancements in design and claims of improved safety, however this largely consisted of claims that had not had ample time to assess. The advancements are still not at scale nor as I said, well tested over time. Developing the workforce that is adequately trained and skilled to properly handle these novel technologies also does not yet exist at scale.

"Baseload" or "Firm" Power and Energy Alternatives: There is much discussion about the desire for the state to expand its baseload power capacity and that "advanced" nuclear could be a solution to supplement existing coal-based baseload units. There are several considerations however.

Long-duration energy storage continues to show a sharp decline in cost. Storage technology enables renewables such as wind and solar as a primary baseload energy source of generation. Right now, according to Lazard's 2025 Levelized Cost of Energy report, renewable alternatives, including those that incorporate long-duration energy storage, are cheaper. Lazard's 2025 LCOE+ report highlights that renewables remain the most cost-competitive form of new-build generation on an unsubsidized basis (i.e., without tax subsidies). Long-term energy storage continues to decline in cost. Renewables are not only the lowest-cost and quickest-to-deploy generation resource. Lazards also determined that the "firming" value of low-cost intermittent generation rises as the penetration of the renewable market increases.
https://www.lazard.com/research-insights/levelized-cost-of-energyplus-lcoeplus/

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Consideration of Costs: Nuclear energy projects have a history of cost overruns. Developing a nuclear project in the US can have total costs often reaching $10 billion to $20 billion or more for a large reactor, translating to $8,000 to over $13,000 per kilowatt (kW), driven by complex construction, strict regulations, lengthy timelines, and significant financing costs, as seen with Plant Vogtle's $15 billion unit, while newer advanced reactors are aiming for a cost of $4,000-$6,000/kW. However, smaller reactors are subject to economies of scale and are more likely to be more expensive per kW.

In addition to the construction costs, there are other associated costs with nuclear energy that should be factored in compared to other forms of generation such as renewables. Host communities, particularly those in high-risk areas, would need to factor in the costs related to preparedness for a nuclear incident, including items such as shelter preparation, development of communication systems for hazard incidents, fallout monitoring and evacuation planning.

Waste and storage considerations: While most nuclear waste is only significantly radioactive for tens of years and can be stored in near-surface facilities, a small volume (about 3%) is long-lived, high-level waste (HLW) that requires isolation from the environment for thousands of years. Nuclear waste, primarily spent nuclear fuel, is stored at over 100 U.S. reactor sites. New projects would be subject to store their waste on site as well and the cost for this also needs to be factored in. Currently there are over 90,000 metric tons of spent fuel stored at temporary sites, with inventory growing by 2,000 tons annually.

SMRs will not reduce the problem of what to do with radioactive waste. The fact that small modular reactors are designed to be more dispersed means we will still have to deal with waste storage on site at this point in time. This also means management of both active and legacy waste sites over smaller but more dispersed areas. For the time-being, there are still no realistic prospects for licensing centralized storage sites.

There is a question on how we will be able to manage these sites over time. I came from the town of Fairfield, Ohio which was eleven miles east of the Fernald Feed Materials Production Center —a major nuclear production facility which ran from 1951 through 1989 and was remediated in 2006 at a cost of $4.4 Billion to clean up 1.5 billion pounds of radioactive waste that infiltrated the air, soil and drinking water. To this day many parts of the site are uninhabitable for perpetuity and the groundwater aquifer that feeds into the Great Miami River still receives approximately 300 pounds of uranium runoff annually that must be pumped and treated continually.

Those contaminants also did not stay on site, with subcontractors from National Lead of Ohio taking materials offsite to a residential area of my college town of Oxford which was 20 miles to the north, and to a company called Associate Aircraft for uranium machining that was 1.5 miles to the east of my parent's house. The full impact of the contamination at Oxford was not completely discovered until the 1990s for contamination which took place in the 1950s. Similarly the contamination at Associate Aircraft took place in the 1950s but not fully discovered nor remediated until the 1990's through 2000s. These lessons from the past illustrate how important it is not to be swayed by the promise of new technologies but to also address the realities of what we are proposing to manage in an era of novel designs and a new generation workforce.

Fernald FUSRAP Site: https://www.energy.gov/lm/articles/fernald-preserve-ohio-site-fact-sheet
Fairfield FUSRAP Site: https://www.energy.gov/lm/articles/fairfield-ohio-site-fact-sheet
Oxford FUSRAP Site: https://www.energy.gov/lm/articles/oxford-ohio-site-fact-sheet

More info from the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists from 2024:
https://thebulletin.org/2024/07/why-us-nuclear-waste-policy-got-stalled-and-what-to-do-about-it/

More info from Scientific American, 2023: https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/nuclear-waste-is-piling-up-does-the-u-s-have-a-plan/

Nuclear Projects are on a long timeline. Developing a nuclear project in the U.S. is a 10-15 year process from planning to operation, with licensing and regulatory approval taking years (often a decade or more) before even starting construction, which itself can add another 5-10+ years, depending heavily on design (like faster Small Modular Reactors or SMRs) and regulatory oversight by the NRC, with recent projects seeing significant delays but new initiatives aiming for faster, standardized builds.

This is not compatible with the timeline needed for many proposed commercial projects, such as the rush for energy to build out data centers for artificial intelligence.

New Nuclear deregulation may be undermining safety improvements. Recent efforts are focused on speed and cost rather than safety. Executive orders issued in May of 2025 by the Trump Administration are designed to speed up the process for nuclear projects, and may be sacrificing safety. Four executive orders (EOs) were aimed at jump-starting the nuclear energy industry.

The EOs call for a major reorganization of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, accelerated licensing timelines, construction of reactors for U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Department of Defense use, and support for nuclear fuel cycle infrastructure, among other actions.

The vast majority of the actions will need the applicable agencies to undertake rulemakings, and industry stakeholders must engage in the rulemaking process to ensure the promised efficiencies are realized https://www.hklaw.com/en/insights/publications/2025/05/president-trump-signs-4-executive-orders.

We are already seeing a deterioration of oversight for the sake of expediency. A recent expose reported by National Public Radio from February 2026 showed how the Trump Administration is establishing new rules that are reducing environmental and security requirements for experimental nuclear reactors. https://www.npr.org/2026/02/26/nx-s1-5727510/secret-rules-experimental-nuclear-reactors-now-public

Nuclear Projects are a National Security issue. Reactors using HALEU (High-Assay Low-Enriched) uranium can be used in advanced nuclear reactors. Many next-generation reactors need HALEU for smaller designs, longer operations, and greater efficiency but requires strict controls, even as it's used for civilian and research purposes.

Lane Boldman
Executive Director,
Kentucky Conservation Committee
Submitted on March 25, 2026

Additional Reference Sources and articles:

U.S. Department of Energy background on Paducah: https://www.energy.gov/pppo/paducah-background
Ky. Historical Society- Why Maxey Flats matters: https://history.ky.gov/news/why-maxey-flats-matters

Jan. 2026: Trump administration has secretly rewritten nuclear safety rules: https://www.npr.org/2026/01/28/nx-s1-5677187/nuclear-safety-rules-rewritten-trump

The orders slash hundreds of pages of requirements for security at the reactors. They also loosen protections for groundwater and the environment and eliminate at least one key safety role. The new orders cut back on requirements for keeping records, and they raise the amount of radiation a worker can be exposed to before an official accident investigation is triggered.

Jan. 2026: The Department of Energy (DOE or the Department) proposes to amend its regulations for worker safety and health to expedite the review, approval, and deployment of advanced reactors under DOE's jurisdiction including qualified test reactors in DOE's reactor pilot program, consistent with a recent Executive order. The revisions would ensure that DOE's worker safety and health program continues to protect workers, while incorporating lessons learned from decades of operating experience and fostering nuclear innovation and technologies to the benefit of the United States. Additionally, the proposed rule would make minor updates to these regulations to improve clarity.

February 2026: Trump Administration exempts new nuclear reactors from environmental review: https://www.npr.org/2026/02/02/nx-s1-5696525/trump-nuclear-safety-regulations-environmental-review

The Trump administration has created an exclusion for new experimental reactors being built at sites around the U.S. from a major environmental law. The law would have required them to disclose how their construction and operation might harm the environment, and it also typically required a written, public assessment of the possible consequences of a nuclear accident.

[Also see addendum on page 5]

KCC Addendum: Supplemental Comments on the notions of "Clean, Reliable, & Environmentally Friendly" advanced fission reactors as presented by or before the PSC on case 2025-00186. Comments by Will Herrick, Nuclear advisor

The PSC case 2025-00186 public meetings in Morehead and Louisville included both presentations by Kenya Stump, executive director of Kentucky's Office of Energy Policy (KYOEP), an office that considers all sources of energy, their affordability, security, and education, and by public participants.

OEP Staff's introduction to fission reactors omitted some things and we dispute others.

- While it was mentioned that the NRC, not the state, will manage the "jurisdiction, facilities, and materials," an omission was the NRC role in NPP design, safety, operation and decommissioning, skipping the fact that the state will cede all oversight to the federal government once the NRC license is accepted.[1] [2]
- It was asserted that an NPP could operate for 80 to 100 years. That is incorrect under current law, the NRC licenses to date are a 40 year term with a 20 year extension. There has never been an 80 or 100 year operating license.[3]
- If KYOEP is meant to consider affordability, there was a missed the opportunity to present the fact that many of the NPPs in the US have become unprofitable in less than 60 years[4] as competing technologies have become significantly cheaper in that interval, and that trend is certain to continue.[5] The evidence is that even 25 years from now advanced reactors will not be cost competitive in a free market.[6]
    - The presentation initially conflated Kentucky's fuel production with NPP electricity production but later observes that Kentucky has never had an NPP.
- -The "highly reliable" assertion skips the 30 year interval of design flaw and debugging in the simpler LWRs.[7] To get a feel for how often emergencies or unscheduled events makes NPP reactors shutdown, an advanced search of the NRC public and archived

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1 https://www.atomicarchive.com/resources/documents/postwar/atomic-energy-act.html

2 https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-1630/pdf/COMPS-1630.pdf

3 https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-10/chapter-I/part-52
"§ 52.55 Duration of certification.
(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, a standard design certification issued under this subpart is valid for 40 years from the date of issuance."

4 https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R46820 Summary Paragraph 3

5 https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/aeo/electricity_generation/pdf/AEO2025_LCOE_report.pdf

6 https://zero.lab.princeton.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Renteria-et-al.-2025-Evaluating-advanced-nuclear-fission-technologies.pdf See p15, "Conclusions": "Without subsidies, recently reported costs of first generation advanced reactors would prohibit the technology from being profitable." Section 4, "Discussion": "In practice, however, the promise of SMRs to lower construction costs and increase predictability may prove overly optimistic. For example, in 2023, NuScale Power increased construction cost estimates for their first commercial project—a 462 MW facility featuring six 77 MW modular, factory-produced reactors—by 75 %, and this cost increase would have been even more significant without the countervailing impact of IRA and DOE subsidies"

7 https://www.science.org/content/article/smaller-cheaper-reactor-aims-revive-nuclear-industry-design-problems-raise-safety

document database (https://adams.nrc.gov/wba/) for titles that contain “PNO” (Preliminary Notification Of event) and “Shutdown” yields 151 events in the 70s, 539 events in the 80s decade (covering 112 NPPs), 370 events in the 90s (104 NPPs), 169 events in 00s (104 NPPs), and 145 in the 10s (94 NPPs), a total of more than 1300 unscheduled shutdown events in the NRC record since 1970.

- The historical record is clear that the Light Water Reactors were a simpler, safer and more reliable design than the gas cooled, molten salt cooled, mercury cooled or graphite moderated reactors designed and tested from the mid 1940s to the 1980s, the reactors now being presented as next-gen advanced reactors. The assertion that all the novel reactors being considered by the NRC are reliable at a commercial scale is pure speculation, none have ever been built at that scale but for two (In Russia and China) and those are not performing well[8].
    - KYOEP discounts the weapons and military use as fear mongering, and any student of history knows better. The Ford and Carter administrations (and the rest of the world soon followed) abandoned reprocessing spent fuel after India and Pakistan diverted their civilian reactor generated SNF to making the plutonium bombs they tested and demonstrated.
- The “lessons from the past” slide in the presentation notes that “modern federal environmental hazardous waste and nuclear regulations are the direct result of these legacy sites (PGDP & Maxey Flats) from the 1960s” - that’s terrible logic: 1) the Fed’s law is a 1946 & 1954 product. The PDGP was built in 1952 and Maxey Flats was built in 1963, 2) the current federal administration is decimating those environmental and safety laws [9] [10](NEPA, NRC, etc), as is Kentucky’s SB57 & SB178.
- We dispute the information on “Advanced reactors ...Reduced Spent Fuel Volumes”[11] [12], a TRISO SNF is reported to be20x (+) more volume than a fuel rod assembly system. Also they’ve never been built or licensed at scale.
- The “host community considerations” slide also neglects the need for prescience, as the choices made now will be fixed for 40 + years once the NRC licenses a site. That needs emphasis, locals will have to petition the NRC for any relief.
- The Office of Energy Policy’s presentation at PSC Case 2025–00186, in spite of staff assertion they are obligated to consider all energy sources, never mentioned any alternatives. That’s a glaring conflict with the opening assertion of the KYEOP’s role to consider all the other means to make electricity. It’s reasonable to focus on nuclear power at the PSC case 2025-00186, but to entirely ignore the alternatives is myopic.

Broadly, the Speed School of Engineering students that spoke appear to have a teacher that cherry picked the issues-they all cited the big accidents as the only basis for public opinion and then discount the public’s sense of things as an ignorant fear. They appear to not have been taught the history of reactor development, the genesis of federal law, the impact of public

8 https://www.powermag.com/a-closer-look-at-two-operational-small-modular-reactor-designs/
9 https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/01/21/2026-01066/worker-safety-and-health-requirements-to-support-reform-of-nuclear-reactor-testing
10 https://www.propublica.org/article/trump-nuclear-power-nrc-safety-doge-vought
11 https://news.stanford.edu/stories/2022/05/small-modular-reactors-produce-high-levels-nuclear-waste
12 https://www.pnas.org/doi/pdf/10.1073/pnas.2111833119 (Krall, MacFarlane & Ewing: Nuclear Waste from small Reactors, MacFarlane was NRC chair from 2102-2014)

opinion, the valid concerns of waste management, or any of the other downsides to nuclear systems. They also seem to have not done much homework on the subject.

- Speaker Nick Cole presented the sense that public perception of nuclear systems is limited to Chernobyl, & Fukushima, but he skips all the history, waste, and cost issues (cited above in the KYEOP section) that form a lot of the public perception & asserts that it's only the accidents and the impossible nuclear excursions of SNF or LEU that are what concerns the public,. He wrongly ignores the gamma radiation issues of SNF- a train wreck of SNF is not something to discount. He does question the end use (and should) - is it just for a data center, etc.

- The Speed school engineering student, Will McCallister, that presented at the Louisville meeting made some assertions that are largely speculative or invalid: "Reliable", "Clean" Environmentally less intrusive than the alternatives, an efficient use of money" He doesn't mention that the SMRs that have been built are not performing well: https://www.powermag.com/a-closer-look-at-two-operational-small-modular-reactor-designs/

McCallister's testimony had demonstrable flaws:

He cited the "International Energy Association." We assume he may have meant the International Energy Agency. He offered some dollar estimate of the LCOE for Coal $88/megawatt, gas $71/ , Solar $56/, wind $50, "advanced nuclear (never been built at utility scale) projected cost $32/. The nuclear projection assumes a massive market, some 30 years of installing SMRs at 2x the highest rate we ever made NPPs. He also just ignored the capital cost of construction and loan service when he stated nuclear was cheaper than alternatives once past the front-end costs." It's likely that if he had made the same capital cost exclusions for hydro, wind, or solar, they would have been far cheaper than nuclear.

The above numbers seem questionable. The IEA reports very different numbers https://www.iea.org/reports/breakthrough-agenda-report-2025/power (e.g. Onshore Wind: $34 per megawatt-hour, Solar PV: $43 per megawatt-hour, Hydropower: $57 per megawatt-hour, Lazard does too https://www.lazard.com/media/uounhon4/lazards-lcoeplus-june-2025.pdf

The LCOE of nuclear is much higher than the alternatives. What the IEA projects as the LCOE for new advanced nuclear reactors is in the range of ~$80-130 per megawatt-hour or more. https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/aeo/electricity_generation/pdf/AEO2025_LCOE_report.pdf

McCallister accrued the cost of "lithium, cobalt, and nickle mining" to wind and solar renewables, but did not mention the costs of uranium mining. Lithium mining as practiced is messy. Metal Oxide Framework and dialysis technologies look likely to open up new sources with lower impacts in the next decade. McCallister neglected the mining & radon cancers documented in the Four Corners US Uranium mines or the Superfund cleanups in the region like Uravan. (https://www.nrc.gov/info-finder/decommissioning/uranium/umetco-uravan , https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/radioactive-revival-new-mexico/ , https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/abandoned-uranium-mines-a/ , https://www.uravan.com/UnionCarbidead.htm).

McCallister asserted that nuclear is “safer than coal and gas” but he did not mention to solar or wind. His assertion has missed the PGDP health and safety problems[13], and the CFC emissions: “On May 29, 2001 James Bruggers reported in the Courier-Journal 82 that “The uranium enrichment plant in Paducah, Ky., and its sister facility in [Portsmouth] Ohio have been by far the country's largest industrial emitters of a chemical [CFC-114] that eats the Earth's protective ozone layer. “ … “The CFC emission numbers are found within the EPA's toxic release inventory, a giant public database of self-reported pollution totals. In all, the Paducah and Ohio plants released 818,000 pounds of CFC-114 in 1999. That amounted to 88 percent of the national total of industrial sources, and 14 percent of an international industry estimate of all CFC-114 emissions worldwide. ” [14]

McCallister asserted that Chernobyl was an outlier, he did not mention that the carbon moderated reactors of that design are known to be flawed as they are unstable at shutdown, Chernobyl happened because they were practicing “safe” shutdowns.
https://www.schoolnet.org.za/PILAfrica/en/webs/3426/data/cause/designfl.htm ,
https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg14619791-100-russia-rejects-pleas-to-shut-risky-reactors/ https://shippai.org/fkd/en/hfen/HA1000644.pdf
https://times.org/the-long-tragic-trail-of-defective-general-electric-nuclear-reactors-from-hanford-to-fukushima/

Design safety of SMRs is not yet proven https://www.science.org/content/article/smaller-cheaper-reactor-aims-revive-nuclear-industry-design-problems-raise-safety

Yaya Muhhamed, also a Speed School student, appears to like the Pu Seaborg cycle based NPPs as an infinite fuel, a technology abandoned decades back (October 28, 1976, President Ford stopped plutonium reprocessing in the US[15], it’s been an international policy for civilian reactors to use uranium for almost two decades. Viz the 2011 Congressional Research Service report “Managing the Nuclear Fuel Cycle”).

It seems to ignore waste issues even though it is one of the foremost concerns to the public[16]. It also assumes there will be local construction jobs. That is unlikely, NPP construction is specialized and that workforce travels to the construction site. As well, one of the sales pitches

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13 https://www.gao.gov/products/rced-00-96 “DOE's Paducah Plan Faces Uncertainties and Excludes Costly Cleanup Activities”

14 http://www.courier-journal.com/localnews/2001/05/29/ke052901s30057.htm

15 In the Volume 17, 2009 issue of Science & Global Security, T. Cochran, H. Feiveson and F. von Hippel reported that: “On March 24, 1977, President Jimmy Carter, building on an October 28, 1976 decision by President Ford directed the indefinite deferral of commercial reprocessing and plutonium recycling in the United States. In the same directive, President Carter suspended the licensing process geared toward obtaining a Limited Work Authorization for the Clinch River Breeder Reactor. The decisions by Presidents Ford and Carter were primarily in response to India's use of plutonium separated with U.S. assistance in an ‘Atoms for Peace’ program to make a nuclear explosion in 1974.’

16 https://thebulletin.org/2024/07/why-us-nuclear-waste-policy-got-stalled-and-what-to-do-about-it/ Victor Gilinsky, NRC commissioner during the Ford, Carter and Reagan administrations: “While in the end the [Yucca Mountain] project was shelved by a political act, behind it were Energy Department and Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) actions that left a deep residue of public distrust, so deep that there isn’t likely to be a US geologic repository, ever.”

for SMRs is that they are prefabricated and need relatively few construction workers. He is also looking out for his own interest “make sure the high paying technical jobs are for Kentucky residents”. That provincial selection is not going to happen, and I suspect that it is illegal. He thinks we can re-purpose coal power plants to SMRs. While plausible, that is contrary to current federal policy that declares an emergency and requires coal plants to stay in operation. When those policies change, they may revert to the previous preference for low-cost renewables that are not well suited for a retired coal power plant.

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