

Press Release

BECBC welcomes All-Party Parliamentary Group recognition of nuclear as the most powerful, efficient and jobs-rich form of low-carbon energy

Cumbria, 30 June 2021 – Britain's Energy Coast Business Cluster welcomes the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Nuclear Energy announcement that recognises nuclear as the most powerful, efficient and jobs-rich form of low-carbon energy.

“The roadmap to Net Zero could not only bring important opportunities for Cumbria but could also put this county at the centre of helping our nation achieve the 2050 net-zero target and create energy and job security. Being involved in its development was important to us in representing our members, many of whom are involved in the nuclear supply chain.” says BECBC's newly appointed CEO, Dianne Richardson. “BECBC is excited by the prospect for Cumbria to be central to this net zero future. This is where our region is uniquely placed in being able to both be a major player on the supply and demand sides of the equation.”

Trudy Harrison MP with the largest nuclear constituency in the U.K. by far, has played an important leadership role in this, “Bringing industry, academia and organisations supporting nuclear energy together to collaborate and help government understand the part they must now play is critical, that is what we have tried to achieve here and it's what I think is most needed right now”.

“The Government needs to make decisions in this Parliament to restore nuclear capacity to at least 10 GW by the early 2030s. There is no time to prevaricate because most of our nuclear fleet will be gone by 2024, and we need nuclear to build a net zero economy with prosperity shared across all parts and all communities of the UK, and where Cumbria has a long and successful history.”, says John Grainger, Executive Director of the business cluster.

“As outlined by the announcement, the scenario currently is that:

- Most of the current UK nuclear fleet will retire by March 2024 (5 of 8 stations); only one existing station will remain by 2030.
- We need, as a country to create two new large-scale nuclear projects to provide critical low-carbon power and demand for UK fuel.
- Concurrently, we need to enable the rapid deployment of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and Advanced Modular Reactors (AMRs) and continued progress on Fusion”

Grainger adds: “As an area which is steeped in innovation within the sector and has specialized in “First of a Kind” projects, beginning with the opening of Calder Hall in 1957, there is a strong expectation that Government will see Cumbria as an outstanding candidate to be at the vanguard of the solution for our carbon targets and energy security going forward. Equally it will bring job security for decades to come and signals confidence to our young people that a multitude of career opportunities are on the horizon. Additionally, it will open up even more supply chain opportunities for members of BECBC, many of whom are already engaged in existing activity identified on the roadmap but have the capability to diversify further including into export.”

BECBC has several subgroups operating in nuclear and was the first in the county to set up its net zero business group. In addition, BECBC is one of the founding organisations of the Invest In Cumbria Alliance which has the capacity to facilitate and maximise the social value benefits emanating from projects of significant size and ensure these meet the needs of the local communities while delivering value for the investor.

Nuclear, the only source that does not specifically rely on the weather, other countries or carbon, is already recognized as the UK’s only proven source of clean, always-on, emissions-free power, that can produce low-carbon power and low-carbon heat. Furthermore, nuclear is the most jobs-rich form of low-carbon energy: a large-scale project can sustain around 70,000 high-skilled, well-paid jobs.

As such, nuclear helps sustain the UK's global leadership science, engineering and advanced manufacturing. The actions as described would save UK 35 million tonnes of emissions by 2035.

Until 2022, the roadmap outlines 6 important elements:

1. Issue guidance on entering Generic Design Assessment (GDA) for Small and Advanced Modular Reactors
2. Commence legislation for a financing model to cover all stages of large and small new nuclear projects
3. Confirm policy for new UK reactors to utilise fuel manufactured in the UK
4. Agree five-year funding settlement and approach for delivery of an AMR demonstrator
5. Produce National Policy Statement on siting of new build projects, including for SMR and AMR deployment
6. Establish the policy and legislative framework to enable orders by end of 2022 for UK deployment of fleet of SMRs by early 2030s

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BECBC is a private sector-led membership organisation that is deeply rooted in its local community. At the forefront of its ethos is a deliberate focus on collaboration of businesses for the benefit of the wider business community. As such, BECBC members are also heavily involved in social economic causes and take part in BECBC's award-winning Business and Schools Collaboration Project.

Image included: John Grainger, Executive Director BECBC, Dianne Richardson, CEO, BECBC

For more interviews, images and more information contact:
Jutta Devenish, jutta.devenish@zeitgeistcomms.com or by phone on 07824/897976