

Report Argues Nuclear Energy Can Be a Key Driver of Pennsylvania's Economic Development

A new report makes the case for a renewed investment in the nuclear power industry to meet the nation's growing energy needs and fuel regional economic growth.



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PITTSBURGH, PA, UNITED STATES,

August 26, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [A new report](#) from the Energy & Manufacturing in Appalachia (EMA) initiative makes the urgent case for a renewed investment in the nuclear power industry to meet the nation's growing energy needs and fuel regional economic growth. The resurgence of the nuclear industry offers a clear path to clean, reliable power and high-paying jobs, but only with sustained investments in the supply chain and workforce development.

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From data centers powering the AI revolution to next-gen manufacturing, reliable nuclear energy is key to Pennsylvania's economic future and the high-paying jobs it will bring.”

Petra Mitchell, President and CEO of Catalyst Connection

The EMA initiative is led by [Catalyst Connection](#), southwestern Pennsylvania's economic development organization, along with the following regional partners: Alliance for Manufacturing and Technology (AMT), Industrial Modernization Center, Magnet, Manufacturers Resource Center, MANTEC, Maryland MEP, Northeastern PA IRC, Northwestern PA IRC, Reimagine Appalachia, and West Virginia University.

“Nuclear power is essential for meeting the nation's and our region's demand for electricity,” said Petra Mitchell, President and CEO of Catalyst Connection. “From data centers powering the AI revolution to next-gen manufacturing, reliable nuclear energy is key to Pennsylvania's economic future and the high-paying jobs it will bring.”

The Nuclear Industry Supply Chain report, from the EMA initiative, outlines the opportunity for growth of the nuclear industry. Small modular reactors (SMRs) are emerging as a key innovation due to their reduced size, lower costs, and flexibility for applications like power generation and industrial heat, including in remote or industrial sites. The global SMR market was valued at

approximately \$6.14 billion in 2023 and is expected to nearly triple in the next decade.

New Industries Driving Electricity Demand

The demand for electricity in the United States is projected to more than double by 2050. Big Tech leaders like Microsoft, Amazon, and Google are building data centers at a breakneck pace to power emerging AI innovations. The data center market is estimated to grow to \$739 billion by 2030. Communities need reliable, around-the-clock power to attract these data centers. Growing electric vehicle sales are also driving this demand, anticipated to reach 46 percent of vehicle sales by 2030, requiring new charging infrastructure and battery manufacturing facilities.

The US Department of Energy estimates SMRs could add 80 gigawatts globally by 2040 if costs drop to competitive levels. Regulatory hurdles and unproven commercial viability at scale must first be overcome. Increased and sustained investment in research and development is critical to ensuring SMRs help meet our future energy demands. Additionally, supply chain gaps for reactor components must be addressed, as decades of limited construction of new nuclear facilities have inflated costs and delayed new projects.

Southwest Pennsylvania is Ready—Federal Investment is Essential

Federal investments in STEM education and minority-serving institutions aim to grow the nuclear workforce by 275 percent to meet the projected growth of the industry.

“With its renowned academic institutions and existing diverse manufacturing base, southwestern Pennsylvania is in a unique position to capitalize on this nuclear renaissance,” said Mitchell. “But we need sustained investments from the federal government to make it a reality.”

[Read the full report](#)

About Catalyst Connection

Catalyst Connection is a southwestern Pennsylvania economic development organization dedicated to serving manufacturers. For more than 35 years, Catalyst has operated with a focus on powering potential through delivering technical assistance and management consulting services and developing long-standing partnerships across the region. Catalyst maintains a deeply held commitment to modernizing manufacturing and enabling opportunity across business enterprises, individuals, and throughout communities.

Catalyst Connection is supported, in part by, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and the National Institute of Technology Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST MEP). As such, we are an affiliate of the Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center (IRC) and the MEP National Network in southwestern Pennsylvania.

About Energy & Manufacturing in Appalachia initiative

The Energy & Manufacturing in Appalachia (EMA) initiative provides technical assistance and business support to small and medium manufacturers and enterprises in 156 counties of Maryland, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia seeking to expand business, production and jobs in the energy supply chains or to be more energy efficient. The Nuclear Industry report was drafted by the Penn State Extension Energy Team, which gathered content and information from a variety of sources referenced within the document. EMA is supported, in part, by the Appalachian Regional Commission through a POWER and ARISE grant.

Allison Moux
Catalyst Connection
+1 412-918-4252

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