

For Immediate Release

Groups oppose funding for small modular nuclear reactors in federal budget

Ottawa, Monday, March 27, 2023 – Environmental and civil society groups are giving a thumbs-down after the federal government announced new funding on Friday towards the development of small modular nuclear reactors (SMRs). The groups will be looking closely at the numbers in Tuesday's budget.

The “Prime Minister Trudeau and President Biden Joint Statement,” issued on Friday March 24, [committed Canada](#) to provide funding and in-kind support for a US-led program to promote SMRs.

The Canadian government's Strategic Innovation Fund has already given close to \$100 million to corporations working on experimental SMR technologies. In addition, the Canada Infrastructure Bank [has committed](#) \$970 million to Ontario Power Generation's plan for a 300-megawatt SMR at Darlington. Federal funding is benefiting US-based companies [GE-Hitachi](#) and [Westinghouse](#), and Canada's [SNC-Lavalin](#), among others.

All the funded SMR projects are still in the research and development phase. Worldwide, no SMRs have ever been built for domestic use.

In addition, the federal government is giving Atomic Energy of Canada Limited \$1.35 billion a year to conduct nuclear research and development and to manage its toxic radioactive waste. Nearly all this funding is transferred to a consortium of SNC-Lavalin and two US-based companies (Fluor and Jacobs) that are heavily involved in nuclear weapons and SMR research.

Over 100 groups from all across Canada [have criticized](#) the federal government's plan to promote SMR nuclear technology, stating that:

- SMRs are a dirty, dangerous distraction that will produce radioactive waste of many kinds. Especially worrisome are those proposed reactors that would extract plutonium from irradiated fuel, raising the spectre of nuclear weapons proliferation.
- SMRs will take [too long to develop](#) to address the urgent climate crisis in the short time frame necessary to achieve Canada's goals.
- SMRs will be much more expensive than renewable energy and energy efficiency. Small reactors will be even more expensive per unit of power than the current large ones, which have priced themselves out of the market.
- Nuclear power creates fewer jobs than renewable energy and efficiency. Solar, wind and tidal power are among the fastest-growing job sectors in North America.

The [International Energy Agency](#) forecasts that 90% of new electrical capacity installed worldwide over the next five years will be renewable.

The federal government needs to invest urgently in renewables, energy conservation and climate action, not slow, expensive, speculative nuclear technologies.

QUOTES:

“Taxpayer dollars should not be wasted on a future technology whose time is past, like nuclear reactors, when truly clean renewable solutions are up-and-running and getting more affordable all the time.” - Dr. Gordon Edwards, Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility

“Let's compete to be world leaders in renewables. Pouring public funding into speculative reactor technologies is sabotaging our efforts to address the climate crisis.” - Dr. Ole Hendrickson, Sierra Club Canada Foundation

“The SMR technologies are all at the early R&D stage, yet the funding is not following good governance practices by requiring high standards of peer review.” – Dr. Susan O'Donnell, Coalition for Responsible Energy Development in New Brunswick

- 30 -

Media contacts:

Dr. Susan O'Donnell, 506-261-1727, susanodo.unb@gmail.com

Dr. Gordon Edwards, 514-839-7214, ccnr@web.ca