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Benefits of U.A.E. deal

John Engler

Congress is expected to approve the 123 Agreement with the United Arab Emirates this week. The agreement paves the way for the United Arab Emirates to benefit from safe, clean, reliable nuclear power just as we do in the United States and in other industrial countries.

President Obama was right to support this agreement, and the bipartisan support of Congress is a hopeful sign that better days are ahead for the nuclear power industry. But we must also make clear that this 123 Agreement should carry with it a tangible benefit for American industry, resulting in new investment and new jobs back here in the United States.

The agreement deserves approval because the United Arab Emirates is committed to "pursuing the highest standards of nonproliferation and the highest standards of safety and security," Undersecretary of State Ellen Tauscher told a House panel in July. "U.S. cooperation with the U.A.E. will also serve as a distinct counterpoint to those countries that have chosen a different path, in particular, Iran," she said.

The United Arab Emirates also has decided to forgo access to sensitive nuclear technologies, such as enrichment and recycling, to facilitate a nuclear power plant deal, another key to gaining the administration's support.

Lastly, she noted that "U.S. industry is poised to assist with the development of a nuclear power program in the U.A.E., and the Agreement for Cooperation will facilitate its involvement. U.S. technology in this area is leading-edge, and the United States anticipates that the U.A.E. will give it strong consideration as the U.A.E. moves forward in implementing its plans." Let's hope this support was not in vain.

The National Association of Manufacturers' Nuclear Energy Workforce Coalition strongly supports a robust nuclear power industry because nuclear is a reliable low-cost, clean energy that supports a sustainable pro-growth agenda and helps U.S. manufacturers compete globally. This 123 Agreement and the United Arab Emirates decision could generate excellent

jobs in the United States at a time of great economic distress. Further, it could also result in substantial development opportunities for U.S. manufacturers.

The administration has called the United Arab Emirates' nuclear energy program a "model for the world," and the world is watching. Power generation technologies remain one of America's major manufacturing exports, and it is important that we maintain this capability as we expand our own domestic nuclear program. In taking steps to promote safe and secure development of new civilian nuclear power in responsible nations, the U.S. government is promoting what is already America's largest carbon dioxide-free source of electricity.

We should expect these steps taken to facilitate the United Arab Emirates program will pay dividends in terms of new jobs and a resurgent nuclear power industry in the United States.

John Engler is president of the National Association of Manufacturers and former governor of Michigan.

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