

Joseph Jacobson

Microreactors are a promising technology to provide safe, clean, reliable, and affordable energy for commercial use, energy resiliency, and integration into microgrids. They may also be used to power applications including district heating, water desalination and hydrogen fuel production. Remote communities, in particular, are poised to benefit most by reducing dependency on diesel-fueled power generation and exceedingly high energy costs.

SB177 was passed specifically to enable the use of microreactors in Alaska. Federal regulations, administered primarily by the Nuclear Regulatory Agency, address the technical and public safety considerations for permitting and operating nuclear facilities. Importantly, the law as passed in SB177 exempts the requirement for microreactors to only be situated on legislatively designated lands. This exemption provides local control to cities, municipalities, and boroughs and avoids a potentially long political process under legislative siting authority. In situations where a proposed microreactor is in an unorganized borough, the legislature retains siting authority.

DEC should craft microreactor siting regulations that take a minimal approach to the siting process except in those situations where the agency is specifically asked to weigh in. I urge DEC to craft the minimum regulations needed to support this limited role so that the benefits of microreactor technology can be enjoyed by Alaskans as quickly and easily as possible.

Thank you for your consideration.