

Peter Metzger

I am fully in support of the development of microreactor technology in Alaska, especially in the interior where pollution from fossil fuel powered plants has drastically reduced air and ground water quality. I think that facilities like Eielson, Wainwright, UAF and the Aurora Energy Plant are prime candidates for siting of an SMR, especially because the reactor could be used as a cogeneration facility providing both electricity and space/water heat via the existing district heating systems built out in these areas.

I see concerns in the comments surrounding potential on-site storage of nuclear waste. I think it's worth pointing out that small modular reactors are designed to help deal with this problem; the waste they produce won't be stored on site because the reactors aren't refueled on site. At the end of their fuel's service life, the entire SMR unit will be removed, shipped to a separate facility, emptied and refueled before being redeployed.

I also see some individuals who are understandably concerned about the potential dangers associated with leaked nuclear waste. It's worth pointing out that while some reactors have leaked in the past, understanding the real impact of nuclear power is a statistics game. If you analyze the hazardous impacts of nuclear power per unit of energy generated, you'll find that fossil fuel burning plants like the coal and naphtha fired facilities in central Alaska have much more serious health consequences than nuclear power. Citing individual nuclear accidents as evidence that the technology is unsafe is like citing commercial plane crashes as evidence that flying isn't safe; yes, people do die in commercial plane crashes.. But flying is still statistically safer than driving a car.

In short, I'd ask people to take the statistical view of this issue. If you look at the numbers and not the sensationalized news stories, you'll find that nuclear power is a safe and reliable option that can help us reduce pollution while simultaneously providing reliable, schedulable baseload power that our grid desperately needs.