Domestic Uranium Quota Would Harm U.S. Nuclear Energy Industry and Undercut Existing Bilateral Agreement

May 8, 2019, Washington – Two small foreign companies continue to threaten President Trump’s strong support of the U.S. nuclear industry with an ill-advised push for a 25 percent domestic quota on uranium. The two companies, Ur-Energy and Energy Fuels, initiated a petition to limit uranium imports by inaccurately claiming Russian imported uranium distorts the U.S. market despite a longstanding agreement between the U.S. government and Russia that caps Russian uranium imports.

The government to government agreement, called the Russian Suspension Agreement (RSA), already places a cap on uranium imports into the United States. It was instituted just after the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1992 and encourages a diversification of uranium supply. This agreement has been in place for 27 years and has worked well. The agreement is slated to end in 2020 and an extension is currently the subject of negotiations between the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Russian government.

“There is simply no need for an additional domestic quota on uranium,” said David Tamasi, AHUG spokesman. “Not only would this new quota economically harm the U.S. nuclear energy industry, which employs more than 100,000 Americans in good-paying jobs, but an existing bilateral agreement between the U.S. and Russia already exists that caps imports of Russian uranium.”

Today, a minority of enrichment supply to U.S. nuclear plants comes from Russia under the cap, and the United States mainly relies on uranium imports from trusted allies that have abundant resources to meet U.S needs. The U.S., Canada, and Australia together accounted for nearly 60 percent of the U.S. uranium supply in 2017. Additionally, Canada and Australia can supply 100 percent of U.S. uranium needs with their licensed and built capacity if needed. In 2017, Russia supplied less than the 20 percent cap, primarily in the form of enrichment not uranium, and supply of uranium from Russia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan decreased by nearly 30 percent in the same year.

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