

DOE-NE backs NAP feasibility study

A group advocating the use of small modular reactors and microreactors in Puerto Rico announced on October 4 that it was officially beginning the first phase of a nuclear feasibility study with support from the Department of Energy's Office of Nuclear Energy (DOE-NE). The Nuclear Alternative Project (NAP), which is led by Puerto Rican engineers trained in the U.S. nuclear industry, held a kick-off meeting on October 8 at the Sheraton Puerto Rico Convention Center Hotel.

Since 2016, the NAP has used a grassroots approach to engage Puerto Rican mayors, community leaders, policymakers, media, and stakeholders in a conversation about nuclear energy and Puerto Rico's energy sector. The motivation behind the initiative, named #Nuclear4PuertoRico, is "a strong desire to transform Puerto Rico into a modern economy, a world leader in energy sustainability and resilience, and a technology influencer in Latin America," the NAP announcement said.

According to the NAP, nuclear energy was first proposed for the U.S. territory in the 1960s. The nuclear feasibility study



Photo: NAP

The leaders of the Nuclear Alternative Project are (from left): Angel Reyes, Jesabel Rivera, Jesus Nunez, Valerie Lugo, and Eddie Guerra.

now being undertaken is the first to be conducted in Puerto Rico since the 1970s. Hurricane Maria's devastating impact on the Caribbean island and its energy infrastructure in September 2017 highlighted the need for a more resilient power grid.

The NAP submitted a proposal for the feasibility study to the DOE-NE in April to evaluate the economic, safety, and social impact of deploying microreactors and SMRs for Puerto Rico and to provide

energy stakeholders with timely and reliable information. According to the NAP, "the feasibility study will be aligned with ongoing Puerto Rico House of Representatives Resolution 1189, which seeks to evaluate advanced reactors as an option for Puerto Rico's energy future."

The NAP will be responsible for project management and interaction with local communities and leadership in Puerto Rico in collaboration with its technical

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