March 26, 2014

Via U.S. and Electronic Mail
United States Senate
Committee on Foreign Relations
444 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6225


Dear:

I write today on behalf of the 11,000 members of the American Nuclear Society to urge you to support the renewal of the U.S.-China Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement ("123 Agreement"), and oppose any resolution of disapproval.

The ANS believes that the US-China 123 agreement represents a balanced approach to supporting U.S. nonproliferation policies while honoring the rights of other nations to use civilian nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes.

As part of the renewal, U.S. nuclear businesses will continue to be allowed to compete with their international counterparts to provide China with nuclear reactor systems and associated services. In turn, China agrees to a comprehensive package of security and non-proliferation measures, including adoption of full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards; no retransfer of any nuclear material or classified data without U.S. consent; and high levels of physical security for any nuclear facilities or material.

China views nuclear energy as a central component to building a clean, secure, and sustainable energy supply to meet its growing needs. Currently the world’s largest nuclear growth market, China has 24 nuclear power plants in operation, 25 plants under construction, and many more planned to be built. While there are already large-scale contracts underway between China and the U.S., ANS believes that the greatest long term benefits of U.S. nuclear engagement lie in improving global standards of nuclear safety and security and minimizing the risk of proliferation.

Nuclear technology exports provide the U.S. with important nonproliferation advantages, including consent rights on U.S.-manufactured nuclear fuel, the ability to control the retransfer of nuclear technology, and greater general influence over the policies of partner nations. The U.S. is
only one of several nations capable of supporting the development of civil nuclear energy programs in emerging markets. In 2007, Westinghouse received authorization to build four AP1000 reactors in China. Countries like France and Russia also aggressively promote their nuclear technology and through the renewal of the China 123 agreement, the United States will be able to ensure that our technology will not be at a disadvantage in the fastest growing nuclear market.

ANS believes that the United States should work with organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) to ensure nonproliferation expectations are administered consistently by all countries that supply nuclear technology and that a competitive global market for fuel cycle services is available to nations developing civilian nuclear programs.

In closing, please recognize that the choice before Congress is not whether China can continue to pursue nuclear energy and be a valuable partner, but only whether U.S. companies will be given the choice to play an influential role in guiding its development.

If you have any additional questions, or would like further information, please contact Craig Piercy, Washington representative, or Aubrey DeVillez at 202-973-8050.

Respectfully,

Michaele C. Brady Raap
President
American Nuclear Society