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**When the Party Ends:
Maintaining Support for Reactor Conversion
in Challenging Times**

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ABSTRACT

With the advent of a new U.S. administration and Congress, maintaining political and financial support for reactor conversion has become increasingly challenging. Politicians, especially not those previously involved in these issues, have difficulty understanding the need for the long timelines and high costs involved in fuel development and conversion, and the reasons behind delays in achieving planned milestones. The absence of the Nuclear Security Summits has also left advocates without a political touchstone to motivate support. As a result, some lawmakers have made attempts (so far ultimately unsuccessful) to scale back the scope of conversion efforts in the US. Such efforts, it can be anticipated, will become more frequent with budget pressures likely to tighten with mounting deficits and if the urgency of the efforts continue to lose political steam. Both governments and reactor operators and scientists need to be more active in making the case for the value of such funds if they are to be maintained. Other countries should also consider ways in which they contribute more financially or in-kind to these efforts.