



# Eielson Microreactor Pilot Quarterly Newsletter | April 2025

*Welcome,*

This is the ninth edition of a series of quarterly updates from the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Infrastructure, Energy, and Environment (SAF/IEE) on the Microreactor Pilot at Eielson Air Force Base (AFB). This newsletter is intended to provide updates on the pilot's progress, meetings with public officials, as well as any relevant news and events. Previous newsletters can be found on the Eielson Microreactor website at <https://www.eielson.af.mil/microreactor/>.

Please direct any questions regarding the Microreactor Pilot to [SAF.IEE.Micro-ReactorPilot@us.af.mil](mailto:SAF.IEE.Micro-ReactorPilot@us.af.mil).

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## Pilot Program Updates:

The Microreactor Pilot at Eielson AFB in Alaska remains a high priority for the Department of the Air Force (DAF). This pilot is designed to be a critical pathfinder for future advanced nuclear energy projects on Department of Defense installations and in communities nationwide to improve energy security and overall U.S. energy dominance. We remain committed to acquisition protocols and proactive community engagement. The successes and lessons learned from this pilot will serve as a basis for future energy programs within DAF and beyond.

The pilot procurement team is currently in the proposal review process following the dismissal of a bid protest with the Government Accountability Office in April 2024. Our partners at the Defense Logistics Agency continue to work diligently to help us deliver a Notice of Intent to Award. We have leveraged the interim time to strengthen relationships with our federal partners and project stakeholders, and document critical milestones for future phases in the pilot process so we can proceed with next steps once the vendor is selected.

Meanwhile, widespread interest in advanced nuclear energy technology is rapidly growing. In January 2025, SAF/IEE released a memorandum titled "Pathways to Advanced Nuclear Energy at Department of the Air Force Installations," providing guidance for all field personnel interested in pursuing advanced nuclear energy solutions at their base who are looking to be 'the next Eielson'. The DAF approach to energy resilience is technology-agnostic and mission-focused. The memorandum provides guidance on what information installations can start to prepare if seeking advanced nuclear energy technology as a potential energy resilience solution. The memorandum also notes ongoing work to establish a data-driven framework and siting system to aid in the decision-making process for future Air and Space Force locations. The Eielson AFB pilot remains our highest priority; proactive steps are necessary across the Enterprise, so the Department is ready to scale up advanced nuclear energy technology where and when it makes sense.

To that end, the Eielson AFB Microreactor Pilot team hosted virtual dialogues with Alaskan leaders, Tribal members, and regional businesses and partners during the March 2025 Council for the Alaska Microreactor Program (CAMP) engagements. Although the team had intended to travel to Fairbanks in-person, concurrent federal budget negotiations prompted a pivot to virtual meetings to ensure federal stakeholders could participate. The DAF greatly appreciates flexibility by all attendees which allowed productive dialogues to continue online. We hope to return to Fairbanks for in-person engagements with partners and stakeholders in the near future, pending approval for government travel.

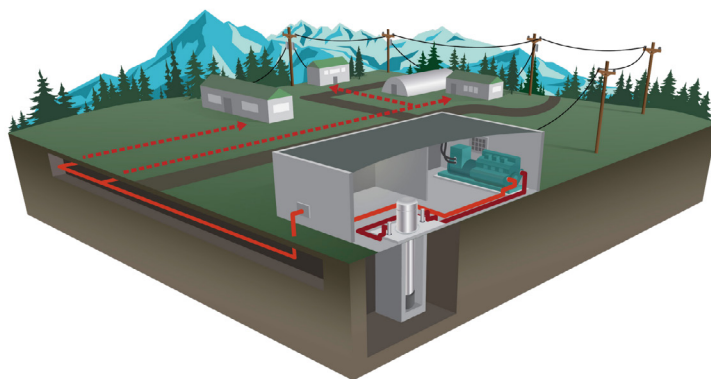
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## CAMP Week Meeting/Briefing Activity:

*From March 18-20, 2025, the Microreactor Pilot team held ten engagements with federal, state, and local community members to provide pilot updates, share information on advanced nuclear energy, and allow time for questions and feedback.*

## Council for the Alaska Microreactor Program (CAMP) Meetings

Ms. Nancy Balkus, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Infrastructure, Energy, and Environment (SAF/IEE), hosted a virtual session of the quarterly CAMP to engage with pilot partners and community leaders. During the CAMP meetings, the SAF/IEE team presented pilot updates, shared the wider DAF advanced nuclear energy strategy, and discussed the impacts of new executive orders (EOs) on the pilot process and timelines. Presenters from Idaho National Laboratory (INL) and the University of Alaska Fairbanks Center for Energy and Power (ACEP) provided informational presentations. INL discussed a comprehensive nuclear industry update, covering commercial advanced nuclear projects, such as the Vogtle Units 3 and 4 in Georgia, and the Palisades restart in Western Michigan. ACEP discussed an overview of their polling and research on attitudes toward advanced nuclear energy in Alaska and shared educational opportunities for the community on how to learn more about advanced nuclear energy. CAMP attendees had the opportunity to provide updates and participate in a Q+A session at the end of the meeting. Our goal, pending government travel approval, is to return to the next in-person CAMP that is tentatively scheduled for late summer 2025 in Fairbanks, Alaska.



*Conceptual layout of a generic SMR or MNR plant in a community. Graphic by Alaska Center for Energy and Power.*

## Base Town Hall

Ms. Nancy Balkus, Col Paul Townsend, Commander of Eielson AFB, Mr. Brian Smith of INL, and Mr. Joe O'Hara of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), participated in a hybrid base town hall, hosted on Teams in the Yukon Ballroom, and moderated by Maj William Knox of the 354th Civil Engineer Squadron. The town hall provided a forum for those on base to learn more about the pilot. Ms. Balkus provided an update on the Microreactor Pilot, Col Townsend discussed base updates, Mr. Smith discussed INL's test bed capabilities where vendors will be able to run and test their microreactors, and Mr. O'Hara gave an overview of the NRC's two-part licensing process. Following the presentations, base community members were able to ask questions during the Q+A portion of the town hall. Audience questions focused on the future of the microreactor, including obstacles, safety, workforce personnel, and integration with the existing coal power plant. SAF/IEE expressed the biggest obstacles to the pilot are completing vendor selection and fuel source availability, which is dependent on the selected vendor's design. SAF/IEE and its partners are making it a priority to educate the base and surrounding community on microreactor technology and safety features. DAF looks forward to hosting an in-person town hall in the near future to continue the conversation and discuss potential solutions to obstacles identified throughout the pilot process with the Eielson AFB community.

## Public Information Session

The week concluded with a [Public Information Session](#) hosted virtually on Teams Live and moderated by Ms. Brittany Smart of ACEP. Ms. Balkus kicked off the presentation with an introduction and overview of the pilot. Ms. Smart provided an overview of ACEP's current research and community outreach related to advanced nuclear energy, and Mr. Smith of INL delivered two presentations on advanced nuclear energy technology, including the cost and economics related to it. DAF addressed queries on the project timeline, financing structure, and potential plans for the expansion of advanced nuclear energy in the U.S. Project partners shared further information on safety features for microreactors, financial implications of the program, and regulatory aspects. For more information, the briefing is available on the Eielson AFB website: [Public Information Session Brief](#).



## Local Leadership Meetings:

*In addition to larger stakeholder meetings like the CAMP and the Base Town Hall, the Microreactor Pilot team held smaller group meetings with project stakeholders.*

### March 18: Department of Energy (DOE) Arctic Energy Office

On March 18, the SAF/IEE pilot team met with Ms. Loren Friedel, the Nuclear Energy Liaison to the DOE's Arctic Energy Office (AE) and Mr. Michael McEleney, AE Senior Advisor. The SAF/IEE team provided an overview of the pilot, answered licensing questions, and discussed future advanced nuclear opportunities and areas for collaboration.

### March 19: ACEP, Local Mayors, & Doyon Limited

On March 19, the pilot team started the day by meeting with Dr. Jeremy Kasper of ACEP. The initial conversation focused on brainstorming pathways for building local advanced nuclear energy champions and long-term opportunities to collaborate with the university. The team later hosted a virtual meeting with Mayor Larry Terch from City of the North Pole and Mayor Grier Hopkins of Fairbanks North Star Borough to provide an overview and updates on the pilot. The DAF team and representatives from NRC and INL then met with executives from Doyon Limited, the utility company for the Fairbanks area, to start conversations on an expanded partnership, cooperation regarding the current pilot at Eielson AFB, as well as potential future energy projects at other DAF installations in their service territory. We look forward to expanding our relationship with these critical partners and hope to collaborate on future critical energy projects to increase energy resilience and capabilities at DAF installations in Alaska in the near future.

### March 20: Tanana Chiefs Conference

On March 20, the pilot team met with the Tanana Chiefs Conference to provide project updates and hosted a Q+A discussion, addressing questions prompted by recent executive orders and facilitate information sharing on licensing and siting, including the National Environmental Policy Act process required for this pilot.

## Other Relevant News:

### Local Engagement

The Tanana Chiefs Conference Annual Convention occurred March 10-13 in Fairbanks, Alaska. DAF hosted a booth led by the Eielson AFB Installation Tribal Liaison Officer with approximately 400 visitors on day-one of the conference, and 250 visitors on day-two. DAF provided an update on the Microreactor Pilot in the November 2024 issue of the Tanana Chiefs Conference newsletter, "The Council," with a letter from Ms. Nancy Balkus (SAF/IEE). For more information on the newsletter, [click here](#).

### White House Update

The DAF is actively evaluating recent executive orders released by the new administration and expect continued support for the Microreactor Pilot at Eielson AFB. The DAF is conducting a thorough review of all new policies, specifically E.O. 14153 "Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential," E.O. 14154 "Unleashing American Energy," E.O. 14156 "Declaring a National Energy Emergency," and E.O. 14213 "Establishing the National Energy Dominance Council," to assess their applicability to the pilot program and future efforts.

### Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Regulatory Information Conference

The NRC hosted their annual hybrid Regulatory Information Conference from March 11-13, 2025, in Bethesda, Maryland. The DAF attended sessions covering topics including the United States' role in nuclear energy leadership, efforts to increase licensing efficiency, implications of Artificial Intelligence for nuclear energy, and much more. Multiple speakers noted the NRC is the "gold standard" for nuclear regulation and NRC Commissioners and staff reiterated that the agency remains committed to safety. NRC is actively working to implement changes to align with the Accelerating Deployment of Versatile, Advanced Nuclear for Clean Energy (ADVANCE) Act of 2024, including updating its mission statement and determining ways to increase efficiency and reduce delays in both the licensing and permitting processes. For more information on the session, [click here](#).

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## Resources:

Please visit <https://www.eielson.af.mil/microreactor/> for the most up to date information and the following resources:

- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Fact Sheet](#)
- [Public Information Session Brief](#)

## Survey:

*We want to hear from you!*

Please fill out this short survey with any questions, comments, and/or feedback.

Your input helps us improve and tailor our future engagements and communications regarding the pilot:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/76CCNGY>