



# Eielson Micro-reactor Quarterly Newsletter

12.09.2024

## Welcome,

This is the eighth of a series of quarterly updates from the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Energy, and Environment (SAF/IEE) on the micro-reactor pilot at Eielson Air Force Base (AFB). This newsletter is intended to provide updates on the procurement process, meetings with public officials, as well as any relevant ancillary news and events that affect these efforts. Previous newsletters can be found on the Eielson AFB micro-reactor website at <https://www.eielson.af.mil/microreactor/>.

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

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## Pilot Program Updates:

The Eielson AFB micro-reactor pilot procurement remains temporarily paused for additional proposal reviews. To maintain momentum while ensuring all due diligence requirements are completed, the Department of the Air Force (DAF) is participating in proactive conversations with key partners.

In August 2024, the DAF and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) executed an addendum to an existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on environmental reviews for the micro-reactor on Eielson AFB to ensure a well-coordinated, efficient, and transparent environmental review process. The NRC is to lead federal action, conduct public scoping, and lead development of the environmental document. The DAF will be responsible for leading the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultations and Endangered Species Action Section 7 processes. All findings of the NEPA process will be made publicly available.

The DAF micro-reactor pilot team also visited Fairbanks, Alaska in August 2024, engaging with local leaders, Tribal members, and regional businesspeople, further detailed below.

The micro-reactor pilot remains a critical pathfinder to establish guidance for future advanced nuclear energy projects to enhance installation readiness. DAF's marked adherence to acquisition protocols, community engagement, and due diligence will inform future programs within the Department and beyond.

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## Meeting/Briefing Activity:

### Council for the Alaska Micro-Reactor Program (CAMP) Meeting

On August 28, Ms. Nancy Balkus, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installation, Energy, and Environment (SAF/IEE), convened an in-person session of the quarterly CAMP to engage with partners and stakeholders. The meeting, held in Fairbanks, coincided with the Alaska Defense Forum. During the CAMP meeting, SAF/IEE delivered comprehensive updates on the micro-reactor pilot and the MOU addendum signed with

the NRC pertaining to environmental reviews. Project partners also provided important updates. The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) summarized its procurement and proposal review process, and the NRC gave an overview of the NEPA process and anticipated public scoping activities. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) delivered an overview of new Congressional funding for advanced nuclear energy, and the Idaho National Lab (INL) provided an update on various nuclear energy projects being developed on its campus. The CAMP briefing slides can be accessed via [www.eielson.af.mil/microreactor/](http://www.eielson.af.mil/microreactor/) under the “Resources” section.

The next in-person CAMP meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 2025 in Fairbanks, Alaska.

### **Fairbanks Town Hall**

On August 26, Ms. Balkus, Col Paul Townsend of Eielson AFB, Dr. Jess Gehin of INL, and Mr. Chris Regan from the NRC, participated in an informational town hall hosted by Fairbanks North Star Borough, Mayor Bryce Ward, at the Noel Wein Library. Approximately 75 community members attended. Ms. Balkus shared updates on the pilot program, and Col Townsend delivered Eielson AFB’s mission brief, emphasizing the importance of mission assurance through energy assurance. Mr. Regan discussed the NRC’s role in the micro-reactor pilot effort, and Dr. Gehin provided an overview of innovative advanced reactor demonstrations ongoing at INL. Following the presentations, community members were able to ask questions during the Q+A portion of the town hall.



### **Local Leadership Meetings**

On August 27, Mayor Ward, Mayor David Pruhs (City of Fairbanks) and Mayor Pro Tem Chandra Clack (City of North Pole) gathered with representatives from SAF/IEE, the NRC, the Air Force Office of Energy Assurance, DLA, the DOE Arctic Energy Office, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Installation Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency, and Eielson AFB to deliver updates on the DAF micro-reactor pilot. Local participants provided SAF/IEE with suggestions on how to better communicate with constituents.

Later in the day, the same group of project partners met with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to provide a similar program update and discuss siting regulations authorized under Alaska Statute 18.45 (the final regulation 18 Alaska Admin. Code 87).

The following day, on August 28, project partners met with the Tanana Chiefs Conference to provide project updates and discuss community perception of the project. The group discussed the importance of environmental protection in addition to energy production for rural areas, how to protect fish and game, and how to best reach Tribal members. As a result of this meeting, pilot information was shared with Tribal communities across Alaska via the November edition of the *The Council* newsletter, viewable at the following link: <https://www.tananachiefs.org/the-council/>.

Project partners met with leaders from six area tribes at Eielson AFB to provide an overview of the micro-reactor pilot and discuss opportunities for tribal engagement throughout the pilot program and beyond. Tribal members encouraged DAF and NRC to attend the March Tanana Chiefs Conference annual meeting and requested the Air Force transparently share information and invite broader tribal participation.

Project partners also met with the DOE Arctic Energy Office to discuss opportunities for collaboration. The DOE provided information about its Nuclear Energy Tribal Working Group and new funding opportunities for nuclear

energy technology.

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## **Other Relevant News:**

### **White House Update**

On November 12, 2024, the White House released *Safely and Responsibly Expanding U.S. Nuclear Energy: Deployment Targets and a Framework for Action*, a strategic plan to drive advanced nuclear energy development. This framework outlines over 30 actionable steps that the U.S. government can take within the bounds of existing statutory frameworks to advance nuclear energy. It addresses key areas such as licensing and permitting, workforce development, supply chain improvements for both fuel and components, and more. Additionally, it highlights the importance of remediating sites affected by previous civil nuclear energy activity. A link is provided below.

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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](#)
- [Factsheet](#)
- [Safety and Responsibly Expanding U.S. Nuclear Energy: Deployment Targets and a Framework for Action](#)