

Q&A: Assistant Secretary Rita Baranwal lays out her vision for the future of nuclear energy

July 16, 2019

Dr. Rita Baranwal is the new assistant secretary for nuclear energy, making her the first woman to lead the office at the U.S. Department of Energy.

As a strong advocate for nuclear energy, she brings more than 20 years of experience in the nuclear field and takes over a \$1.3 billion portfolio to promote the research and development of current and advanced nuclear technologies.

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Rita Baranwal Sworn in as U.S. Department of Energy Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy

July 11, 2019

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Secretary of Energy Rick Perry today officially swore in Dr. Rita Baranwal as the Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy. Dr. Baranwal, whom the U.S. Senate first confirmed on June 20, becomes the first woman to lead the **Office of Nuclear Energy**.

In her new role, Dr. Baranwal will lead the office's efforts to promote research and development on existing and advanced nuclear technologies, maintain the existing fleet of nuclear reactors, and promote the development of a robust pipeline of advanced reactor designs and supply chain capabilities.

"It is an honor to be part of an organization that is leading the U.S. in game-changing, innovative nuclear technologies," said Dr. Baranwal. "Advanced reactors are smaller, cleaner, and more efficient, and will equip the U.S. nuclear energy industry to lead the world in deployment, supplying urgently needed clean energy both domestically and globally."

Dr. Baranwal has directed the **Gateway for Accelerated Innovation in Nuclear (GAIN) initiative** at Idaho National Laboratory since 2016. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) initiative connects industry with national laboratories to help commercialize nuclear technologies. Under her leadership, GAIN positively impacted 112 projects and companies.

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Senate Confirms Baranwal to Serve in DOE Nuclear Leadership Role

June 20, 2019

The Senate on Thursday confirmed Rita Baranwal as assistant secretary of energy for nuclear energy, after Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.) released her hold on Energy Department nominees over federal plutonium shipments to her state.

Cortez Masto, Jacky Rosen (D-Nev.), Ed Markey (D-Mass.), Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) voted against her confirmation, while 86 senators supported it.

Baranwal has directed the Energy Department's Gateway for Accelerated Innovation in Nuclear initiative since mid-August 2016. In that post, she has overseen GAIN's work to develop public-private partnerships and make available the department's financial support and research and development offerings to new nuclear energy technologies in order to help them move toward a commercial market.

Through GAIN, Baranwal has worked closely with the Energy Department, its national laboratories and the private sector and understands how each can be leveraged together "to more rapidly commercialize advanced reactor technologies" and maintain a "gold standard of security and safety," said Ryan Fitzpatrick, deputy director of the Clean Energy Program at the think tank Third Way. Baranwal spoke at a nuclear summit Third Way held in 2017 in collaboration with national labs and other groups, and the center-left think tank helped create a GAIN program developer directory.

Her nomination was first submitted to the Senate on Oct. 5. But in line with Senate rules, her name was returned to the president on the first day of the new Congress, after the chamber did not act on the nomination by the end of the 115th Congress. Baranwal's name was resubmitted for the post on Jan. 16, and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee again advanced her nomination on March 7.



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GAIN announces third round FY-2019 Nuclear Energy Voucher recipients

June 19, 2019

The Gateway for Accelerated Innovation in Nuclear (GAIN) announced today that three nuclear companies will be provided GAIN Nuclear Energy (NE) Vouchers to accelerate the innovation and application of advanced nuclear technologies. NE vouchers provide advanced nuclear technology innovators with access to the extensive nuclear research capabilities and expertise available across the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) national laboratory complex. This is the third set of awards in FY 2019.

The GAIN NE Voucher Program accepts applications on innovation that supports production and utilization of nuclear energy (e.g., for generation of electricity, supply of process heat, etc.) in the following general topic areas:

- Analysis and evaluation of, and for, advanced reactor concepts and associated designs, including development of licensing information or strategies
- Structural material and component development, testing and qualification
- Advanced nuclear fuel development, fabrication and testing (includes fuel materials and cladding)
- Development, testing, and qualification of instrumentation, controls, and sensor technologies that are hardened for harsh environments and secured against cyber intrusion
- Modeling and simulation, high-performance computing, codes and methods
- Technical assistance from subject matter experts and/or data/information to support technology development and/or confirm key technical or licensing issues

The businesses selected to receive GAIN nuclear energy vouchers for Round 3 FY 2019 are:

GAIN 2019 3rd Round NE Voucher Recipient	Awarded Proposal	Partner Facility
Flibe Energy, Inc. Madison, AL	Metal Organic Frameworks for Noble Gas Management in the Liquid Fluoride Thorium Reactor	Pacific Northwest National Laboratory
TerraPower, LLC Bellevue, WA	Improvements to SAS4A Severe Accident Modeling Capabilities to Support Licensing and Commercialization of TerraPower's Traveling Wave Reactors	Argonne National Laboratory
Westinghouse Electric Company Columbia Fuel Fabrication Facility (CFFF) Hopkins, SC	Nuclear Material Holdup Modeling and Measurement Campaign for the Columbia Fuel Fabrication Facility	Oak Ridge National Laboratory

GAIN NE voucher recipients do not receive direct financial awards. The GAIN nuclear energy vouchers provide access to national laboratory capabilities at no cost to the voucher recipients. All awardees are responsible for a minimum 20 percent cost share, which could be an in-kind contribution. Further information on the GAIN nuclear energy voucher program as well as current and all past awards may be found [here](#).

The U.S. Department of Energy Office of Nuclear Energy (DOE-NE) established GAIN to provide the nuclear community with the technical, regulatory and financial support necessary to move innovative nuclear energy technologies toward commercialization while ensuring the continued safe, reliable and economic operation of the existing nuclear fleet. Through GAIN, DOE is making its state-of-the-art and continuously improving RD&D infrastructure available to stakeholders to achieve faster and cost-effective development of innovative nuclear energy technologies toward commercial readiness.

Visit GAIN at <https://gain.inl.gov>. Follow @GAINNuclear on [Twitter](#) or visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/GAINnuclear.

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