



Bill Gates

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Bill Gates and Warren Buffett to build new kind of nuclear reactor in Wyoming

Reuters

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Power companies run by billionaire friends Bill Gates and [Warren Buffett](#) have chosen Wyoming to launch the first Natrium nuclear reactor project on the site of a retiring coal plant.

TerraPower, founded by Gates about 15 years ago, and power company PacifiCorp, owned by Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway, said on Wednesday that the exact site of the Natrium reactor demonstration plant was expected to be announced by the end of the year.

Small advanced reactors, which run on different fuels to traditional reactors, are regarded by some as a critical carbon-free technology than can

supplement intermittent power sources like wind and solar as states strive to cut emissions that cause climate change. [See footnote]

“We think Natrium will be a game-changer for the energy industry,” Gates told a media conference to launch the project in Cheyenne, [Wyoming](#).



📹 TerraPower founder and chairman Bill Gates speaks by video link at the launch in Cheyenne. Photograph: Michael Cummo/AP

“This is our fastest and clearest course to becoming carbon negative,” Wyoming’s governor, Mark Gordon, said. “Nuclear power is clearly a part of my all-of-the-above strategy for energy” in Wyoming, the country’s top coal-producing state.

The project features a 345 megawatt sodium-cooled fast reactor with molten salt-based energy storage that could boost the system’s power output to 500MW during peak power demand. TerraPower said last year that the plants would cost about \$1bn.

Late last year the US energy department awarded TerraPower \$80m in initial funding to demonstrate Natrium technology, and the department has committed additional funding in coming years subject to congressional appropriations.

Chris Levesque, TerraPower’s president and chief executive, said the demonstration plant would take about seven years to build.

“We need this kind of clean energy on the grid in the 2030s,” he told reporters.

Nuclear power experts have warned that advanced reactors could have higher risks than conventional ones. Fuel for many advanced reactors would have to be enriched at a much higher rate than conventional fuel, meaning the fuel supply chain could be an attractive target for militants looking to create a crude nuclear weapon, [a recent report said](#).

Levesque said that the plants would reduce proliferation risks because they reduce overall nuclear waste.

This footnote was added on 4 June 2021 regarding fuel used by the reactor.

According to an Associated Press story on 2 June about the Sodium project, the advanced modular reactor involved (AMR) will - like most traditional reactors - use uranium. A Guardian query on the fuel point has been sent to Reuters; further clarification may follow.

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