

Russian Floating Nuclear Power Unit Sets Sail to the Arctic



Last Friday, Russia's first floating power unit (FPU) *Akademik Lomonosov* set sail from the Arctic port of Murmansk for Pevek, Chukotka, in Russia's Far East, where it will provide power to one of the country's most remote regions. This is sparking environmental concerns.

Developed by the Russian state nuclear company [Rosatom](#), the plant set off on a 5,000km (2700nm) journey through Arctic waters to reach the Chukotka region, which lies across the Bering Strait from Alaska. The plant, loaded with nuclear fuel, will replace a coal-fired power plant and an ageing nuclear power plant supplying more than 50,000 people with electricity in the town of Pevek.

Power Source for Remote Areas

Rosatom says the plant is safe and can serve as a new power source for the planet's most isolated communities, but environmentalists have voiced concerns over the risk of nuclear accidents. "The FNPP project is one of the most promising branches of small nuclear power reactors on the market today. It is especially suited to very remote areas and island states that require stable, green sources of energy."

"So far, significant interest in Rosatom's FNPP technology has come from the Middle East, North Africa, and South-East Asia. Rosatom is currently working on second-generation FPUs, i.e. Optimized Floating Power Units (OFPUs), which will be built in a series and be available for export", Rosatom stated in a press release. Environmental activists are concerned about the latest developments. Greenpeace Russia has called the *Akademik Lomonosov* the 'nuclear Titanic'.

Earlier this month, a deadly blast in northern Russia during a weapons system test caused a spike in radiation levels in a nearby city. Several nuclear engineers were killed in the incident.

Photo: Russian nuclear agency Rosatom shows the floating power unit Akademik Lomonosov being towed from the Arctic port of Murmansk, northwestern Russia (courtesy Rosatom).