

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittees on Energy and Power, Environment and the Economy
Hearing on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's FY 2017 Budget
April 20, 2016**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

This morning we welcome back the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to discuss the agency's proposed Fiscal Year 2017 budget. I'd first like to like to acknowledge Commissioner Bill Ostendorff for his distinguished record of service. Today is likely Commissioner Ostendorff's last appearance before this committee as he has announced he will serve as a Distinguished Visiting Professor of National Security at his alma mater, the United States Naval Academy. Commissioner Ostendorff has served as Captain of a Navy submarine, Congressional staffer, Deputy Administrator for the National Nuclear Security Administration, and NRC Commissioner. We wish him luck in his next endeavor.

The commission's 2017 budget request reflects NRC's ongoing attempt to right-size the organization's funding level and properly align staff resources with the agency's workload, known as Project Aim 2020. This initiative has focused the agency's attention on identifying the highest priority activities in order to safely and effectively oversee our 100 operating nuclear power plants. The breadth and duration of this initiative has been extensive. As the commission looks to execute Project Aim's next steps, I hope you maintain the rigorous culture of self-analysis that has developed over the previous couple years.

NRC's responsibility to license, regulate, and inspect our nation's fleet of nuclear power plants is of utmost importance to protect public health and safety. Nuclear power is especially important to folks of Southwest Michigan with the Cook and Palisades plants. The plants not only provide affordable and clean power to the region and beyond, they provide hundreds of good paying jobs and directly benefit local economies as well. Nuclear energy is, and will continue to be an integral piece of our electricity portfolio.

However, we should also recognize the NRC's role to license and oversee other nuclear material, such as medical isotopes and nuclear medicine treatments. In this context, the NRC is a partner in my bipartisan effort to advance breakthrough medical treatments and 21st Century Cures. I was pleased to see the commission issue a construction permit for a first-of-a-kind facility for medical isotope production in February. I also understand the Commission is actively reviewing another medical isotope application, and there is at least one more expected to be under review. These new technologies and life-saving medical treatments are critical to develop and deploy at a timely pace, and I trust the NRC will ensure competent, efficient review of these applications for the benefit of public health.

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