

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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March 7, 2018

Mr. Ed McGinnis
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Nuclear Energy
Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20585

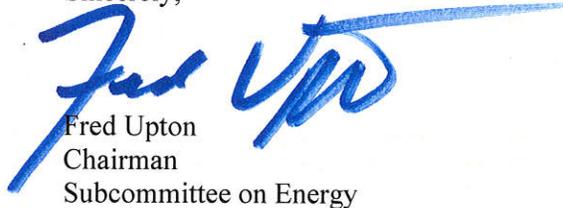
Dear Mr. McGinnis:

Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Energy on February 6, 2018, to testify at the hearing entitled "DOE Modernization: Advancing the Economic and National Security Benefits of America's Nuclear Infrastructure."

Pursuant to the Rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the hearing record remains open for ten business days to permit Members to submit additional questions for the record, which are attached. To facilitate the printing of the hearing record, please respond to these questions with a transmittal letter by the close of business on Wednesday, March 21, 2018. Your responses should be mailed to Kelly Collins, Legislative Clerk, Committee on Energy and Commerce, 2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 and e-mailed in Word format to kelly.collins@mail.house.gov.

Thank you again for your time and effort preparing and delivering testimony before the Subcommittee.

Sincerely,



Fred Upton
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy

cc: The Honorable Bobby L. Rush, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy

Attachment

Attachment—Additional Questions for the Record

The Honorable Fred Upton

1. When we talk on this Committee about DOE modernization, one key approach is to update the relevant laws to ensure the agency's security missions fit the global realities of today, not the 1970s or the 1950s.
 - a. Several witnesses at the hearing talked about the connection between our nuclear infrastructure and threats to our national security interests, if U.S. global leadership on commercial nuclear technology continues to erode. Does DOE recognize these risks? And if so, what in DOE's view are the most important steps to take to address these risks in the short term and long term?
 - b. Will you work with Committee Members to identify where statutory authorities can help strengthen the agency's role to ensure a robust nuclear infrastructure?
2. The Department's Small Modular Reactor (SMR) licensing technical support partnership with NuScale is nearing the end of the project, but I understand there are other ongoing aspects of DOE's small modular reactor program. For example, DOE has entered into a site-use permit to construct NuScale's first SMR at the Idaho National Laboratory and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) has submitted an application to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for an early site permit, the first step for TVA to build an SMR. Additionally, the Office of Nuclear Energy recently released a report detailing how SMRs could provide reliable electricity to Oak Ridge National Laboratory as an example of specific valuable attributes associated with SMRs.
 - a. What other specific steps is DOE considering to help the ultimate deployment of SMRs?
 - b. Does DOE need specific legislative authority to implement the SMR deployment report's recommendations and, if so, what are those authorities?
3. Your testimony referenced the Administration's ongoing civil nuclear review. To assist in the Committee's understanding of the purpose, scope, timing, and process informing the review, please respond to the following:
 - a. What is DOE's role in providing input to the civil nuclear review?
 - b. What is the expected timing of the civil nuclear review's release?
 - c. Will the civil nuclear review receive input from non-government stakeholders and, if so, what is the process by which the review will receive such input?

- d. Will the civil nuclear review make recommendations for statutory changes or propose legislative language to more accurately reflect today's interconnected global civil nuclear market?
 - e. How will the civil nuclear review prioritize its recommendations to appropriately balance long-term infrastructure needs, such as the development and maintenance of a robust fuel cycle, with near-term actions that can directly support the existing fleet of nuclear power plants?
 - f. Will you, as the lead organization for civilian nuclear energy policy issues, commit to working with the Committee to assure our interests are appropriately reflected in the civil nuclear review?
4. Today, in the United States, there are only two new reactors at one site in Georgia. China and Russia are competing to expand their dominance in nuclear technology globally, and the hearing testimony suggested the U.S. risks falling behind our competitors.

This is not a good situation for the national security, economic, or safety benefits of U.S. civilian nuclear participation in global markets. As you know, the Departments of Defense, State, and Commerce all have prominent roles relating to the Administration's nuclear priorities.

Where does DOE fit in the Administration's Cabinet framework with respect to nuclear issues? Is it generally accurate to say the Secretary of Energy is the principal advisor in the Cabinet on matters relating to atomic energy generally, and nuclear weapons technology, and technical nonproliferation matters?

5. The hearing testimony provided a description of a broad portfolio of activities that the Office of Nuclear Energy may provide leadership to help the development of advanced nuclear reactors. Some of those proposals include:
- a. Promoting streamlined licensing and technical support of small modular reactors;
 - b. establishing a licensing and technical support program for advanced non-LWR SMRs;
 - c. developing a prototype reactor testbed infrastructure with extensive facility costs; and,
 - d. a multi-billion dollar new fast neutron test reactor.

All of these proposals would require significant, sustained investment by DOE to successfully achieve the program goal.

How will the Office of Nuclear Energy prioritize and balance these types of proposed initiatives within realistic, historical budgets, while still providing the adequate level of funding to maintain existing infrastructure, including stewardship of DOE's lead nuclear energy laboratory, and research programs that can have a more immediate and tangible impact on the existing nuclear fleet?

The Honorable Richard Hudson

1. As the voice of Fort Bragg, I am very interested in how we can improve the safety and security of our soldiers in the field and our military installations.

A 2016 report from the Department of Defense's Defense Science Board concluded that "there is an opportunity for exploration of the use of nuclear energy applications at forward and remote operating bases and expeditionary forces." These applications would result in first of a kind deployment opportunity, similar to how the Navy's deployment of nuclear reactors helped drive the construction and commercialization of existing fleet of nuclear power plants.

- a. Mr. McGinnis, what potential defense applications for nuclear reactors does DOE see in the near future and what needs to be done to enhance collaboration between DOD and your office?