

Commissioner David A. Wright's Opening Statement
July 14, 2021 House Committee on Energy and Commerce Hearing

Good morning, Chairman Rush and Chairman Tonko, Ranking Members Upton and McKinley, and esteemed members of the Subcommittees. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. And it's wonderful to be here in person, too.

I would like to start by thanking my colleagues, my staff, and the NRC staff for their assistance in getting ready for today's hearing. I'm honored to serve alongside my fellow Commissioners. I appreciate their collegiality and insights on each of the matters before the Commission.

It's bittersweet to be here today with only three of us now, though. We work best with a full complement of commissioners and, although it's only been a couple of weeks since Commissioner Caputo's departure, I know we are missing out on the additional perspectives and wisdom two additional commissioners would bring to our deliberative process.

I'd also like to thank the NRC staff for their work and dedication to the agency's critical safety mission. I am humbled by their efforts, particularly during the past year-and-a-half during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before the pandemic, I spent considerable time walking the halls of the NRC and visiting facilities. These impromptu meetings and visits provided me invaluable insights into the agency's priorities, successes, and challenges. I've learned that success is easy to define: it's the safe and secure operation of the civilian nuclear fleet. This is the shared goal of the Commission, the staff, and our licensees.

The challenge is how to reach that goal in the most effective, efficient, and reliable way while dealing with uncertainties, new technologies, and changes in the regulatory environment.

I believe the NRC is up to the challenge and I am excited by the transformational and innovative initiatives that are going on at the NRC. The staff's hard work and inclusive approach is inspiring.

Commissioner David A. Wright's Opening Statement
July 14, 2021 House Committee on Energy and Commerce Hearing

I'm also pleased to see the work we are doing to improve our budgeting processes in response to the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act.

Finally, I am impressed with how the staff has used challenges from the pandemic to leverage technology and new ways of doing things.

I see change, in particular changes to how we perform our work, as an opportunity. Change allows us to use data and experience to recalibrate our activities and perform our mission as a smarter, more effective regulator ready to regulate both existing and new technologies.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.