

**Chair Jeff Duncan**  
**Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and Grid Security**  
**“American Nuclear Energy Expansion:  
Updating Policies for Efficient, Predictable Licensing and  
Deployment”**  
**July 18, 2023**  
*As prepared for delivery*

Today, the Subcommittee will continue its bipartisan work to develop legislation to help accelerate the expansion of American nuclear technology.

We want to make sure the relevant laws and policies are up to date to enable the full promise of nuclear energy—for the nation and our commercial and strategic relationships around the world.

The importance of American nuclear leadership—and building our commercial relationships—was underscored during our recent CODEL to Japan and Korea, with Ranking Member DeGette and several Subcommittee colleagues.

What we do here can help these relationships in the years to come.

Our goal is to advance durable and bipartisan policies that will expand nuclear energy and its many benefits for the nation. Policies that make sense for the regulation of nuclear power today, and the new technologies expected to seek licensing and deployment in coming years.

This was the purpose of the bi-partisan request for information to stakeholders that Chair Rodgers, Ranking Members Pallone and DeGette, and I made this past April.

In the responses we received and in the hearings we have had to date, it has become clear more can be done to update how both the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Department of Energy implement their respective missions.

And there is growing recognition of the urgency to implement reforms.

The discussion drafts and bills up for review today seek to make changes in law and regulation to align agency actions with the nation’s broader goals for advancing nuclear energy.

These also reflect several of the key recommendations from stakeholders. For example:

In a draft I intend to introduce, we would align in statute the mission of the NRC with the policy goals of the Atomic Energy Act to expand nuclear to maximize the general welfare.

Several draft bills would improve the efficiency and predictability of NRC licensing by:

- requiring more effective decision-making milestones, timeframes, and metrics to measure performance and results;
- avoiding duplicative analyses in siting and environmental reviews, and updating the reviews to reflect the realities of advanced technologies;
- seeking new regulatory processes for advanced manufacturing and technologies, for more efficient and timely licensing;
- cutting the hourly fees the NRC charges in half for new advanced reactor applicants to reduce barriers to participation; and
- reforming a key advisory committee to the NRC to focus on new and novel technologies and reduce unnecessary reviews.

Another bill, following recommendations made by the NRC itself, would eliminate a superfluous Commission hearing at the end of the licensing process that no stakeholders request.

An additional discussion draft aims to update NRC practices to incorporate more efficient oversight to free up resources to focus on safety significant matters.

These are good examples of reasonable, widely supported improvements that will make more effective, efficient, and predictable regulations.

Other bills also involve the Department of Energy. For example, legislative provisions would update DOE's nuclear export reviews, and its role to promote nuclear among our allies.

Other provisions would remove barriers to foreign investment in American projects by our allies and would extend the critical liability protections necessary for nuclear – and many DOE operations.

I should note that not all the provisions today will make it forward in their current form in the process. The goal today is to gather information and discussion, identify issues, and find improvements, so we can ensure more efficient, predictable regulation and oversight.

Today, we'll hear from two witness panels.

First, we will take testimony from two, top officials from the Department of Energy and the NRC. I'm looking forward to their perspectives and information on current and future activity, and how reforms may assist the agencies.

Our second panel includes four representative stakeholders—the Breakthrough Institute, the Nuclear Energy Institute, the Good Energy Collective, and a former NRC commissioner who is representing the U.S. Nuclear Industry Council.

Welcome to you all. This is a solid lineup for what should be a productive hearing.

Finally, let me remind people that modernizing the NRC or DOE authorities does not mean moving away from principles of safety; it means ensuring regulations are updated to reflect the advances and capabilities of the nuclear industry today.

The United States has the technological and engineering talent and capabilities to be the global leader in nuclear. Our regulatory system must operate in reflection of this fact if we are to succeed in our nuclear goals.

I now recognize Ranking Member DeGette for five minutes.