

Commissioner David A. Wright's Opening Statement

July 23, 2024

House Energy and Commerce - Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and Grid
Security

Chair Rodgers, Chairman Duncan, Vice Chair Curtis, Ranking Member DeGette, and honorable members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I want to start by thanking the Committee for its tireless work over the last few years on passing legislation that will help the NRC become a more effective and efficient regulator. This was made possible by strong leadership on both sides of the aisle. I also want to recognize you, Chairman Duncan, for the important role you played in getting this done. You've been a great friend of mine for many years and as a fellow South Carolinian, I appreciate all that you've done for our

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home state and for our country. What you and your colleagues have done will make a difference, not just here but around the world.

And of course, I want to thank my colleagues on the Commission and their staffs for their collegial approach to the work we have to do. We don't always agree but our interactions are always professional and constructive.

Together, we've been able to tackle challenging issues involving advanced reactor licensing, security of radioactive sources, and physical security at our operating reactor fleet. I'm also grateful to the NRC staff, who I

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truly believe are some of the best and brightest minds in the Federal government.

I'd like to focus my remarks today on improving the efficiency of the NRC. On July 9th, the President signed into law the Accelerating Deployment of Versatile, Advanced Nuclear for Clean Energy (or "ADVANCE") Act. The ADVANCE Act was passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in both chambers of Congress. The ADVANCE Act sends a clear signal to the NRC by directing us to update our mission statement to include efficiency in our licensing and regulatory actions. The Act also directs us to provide guidance to the NRC staff

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on how to implement the new mission. This important step will ensure that we're responding to Congress's direction with actions and not just words.

When I testified before you last year, I said that we need to enable – not disable - the safe use of nuclear technology. I believe the ADVANCE Act is saying the same thing. It directs the NRC to regulate in a way that does not “unnecessarily limit...the deployment of nuclear energy or the benefits of nuclear energy technology to society.” We have to perform our vital safety mission, but we can't be a barrier to new technologies that will benefit the American public. I look forward to continuing

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to work with my colleagues on implementing the policies that we need to enable the safe use of nuclear energy and nuclear technologies.

I'd like to close on a personal note. Chairman Duncan, you'll be retiring at the end of this term, and I wanted to take a minute to acknowledge your seven terms in the House. As I said in my opening remarks, you've done our home state proud. Your public service at every level has made a difference and I wish you the best of luck going forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here and I look forward to your questions.