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5 AMERICAN ENERGY DOMINANCE: DAWN OF THE NEW NUCLEAR ERA

6 WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2026

7 House of Representatives,

8 Subcommittee on Energy,

9 Committee on Energy and Commerce,

10 Washington, D.C.

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15 The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:15 a.m., in Room 2123, Rayburn House Office
16 Building, Hon. Robert E. Latta [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

17 Present: Representatives Latta, Weber, Palmer, Allen, Balderson, Pfluger, Harshbarger,
18 Miller-Meeks, James, Bentz, Fry, Lee, Langworthy, Rulli, Evans, Goldman, Fedorchak, Guthrie (ex
19 officio), Castor, Peters, Menendez, McClellan, DeGette, Matsui, Tonko, Veasey, Schrier, Fletcher,
20 Ocasio-Cortez, Auchincloss, and Pallone (ex officio).

21 Also Present: Representatives Carter of Georgia and Joyce of Pennsylvania.

22 Staff Present: Clara Cargile, Professional Staff Member, Energy; Andrew Furman,
23 Professional Staff Member, Energy; Sydney Greene, Director of Finance and Logistics; Calvin Huggins,
24 Clerk, Energy; Megan Jackson, Staff Director; Patrick Kelly, Staff Assistant; Sophie Khanahmadi,
25 Deputy Staff Director; Brayden Lacefield, Special Assistant; Mary Martin, Chief Counsel, Energy; Sarah

26 Meier, Counsel and Parliamentarian; Joel Miller, Chief Counsel; Ben Mullaney, Press Secretary; Seth
27 Ricketts, Special Assistant; Peter Spencer, Senior Professional Staff Member, Energy; Timothy
28 Trimble, Staff Assistant; Matt VanHyfte, Communications Director; Jane Vickers, Press Assistant;
29 Giancarlo Ceja, Minority Staff Assistant; Waverly Gordon, Minority Deputy Staff Director and General
30 Counsel; Tiffany Guarascio, Minority Staff Director; Jackson Hall, Minority Intern; Kristopher Pittard,
31 Minority Professional Staff Member; Emma Roehrig, Minority Staff Assistant; and Tuley Wright,
32 Minority Staff Director, Energy.

33

34 Mr. Latta. Well, good morning. I call the Subcommittee on Energy of the Energy and
35 Commerce Committee to order. And welcome to our first hearing of the new year.

36 The chair recognizes himself for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

37 Today's hearing will examine the current state of the nuclear industry, the emerging
38 prospects for the rapid and widespread deployment of new nuclear technologies, and what more
39 may be done to enable success.

40 The importance of successful growth of American nuclear energy cannot be understated.
41 Most importantly, what we need in this country is more energy. We need firm, reliable power,
42 versatile power, and more of it. We need power for emerging industrial output in the AI race, also
43 for homes and businesses.

44 A robust and growing nuclear industry also strengthens our national security. It does so
45 through increased nuclear commerce with allies and through a more cost-effective industrial base.

46 Congress has already taken significant steps that will optimize the regulatory system and
47 related policies to assist in domestic nuclear deployment.

48 The ADVANCE Act, major provisions of which were developed by the Energy and Commerce
49 Committee members, focused on licensing efficiency, reducing costs, and increasing predictability in
50 the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's licensing. It also provided for improved coordination among
51 agencies and increasing access to nuclear technology for our allies. It increased the abilities of allies
52 to invest in American nuclear projects.

53 Congress also enacted legislation to secure nuclear fuel supplies. It did so by providing
54 funding to jump-start work to develop advanced fuels and banning Russian fuels to create the market
55 conditions that will incentivize new domestic fuel capacity.

56 This legislative work builds upon other legislative measures concerning Federal loan and
57 credit programs, nuclear demonstrations and technical support, and long-term liability protections

58 for nuclear reactors. Congress has established a strong framework for nuclear development for
59 coming decades. How this is being implemented will be an important topic for this hearing.

60 By any measure, the prospects of expanded nuclear power in the United States have been
61 improving dramatically in recent years. Consider that only 5 or 6 years ago we were confronting a
62 wave of nuclear retirements. Today, closed nuclear reactors are being restarted and utilities are
63 seeking to produce more power at existing sites.

64 This Monday, NRC for the first time approved replacement of analog safety equipment with
65 digital controls, which paves the way for modernizing safety controls across the fleet. This action,
66 finally taken after years of regulatory churn, creates a template for other plants to seek NRC approval
67 of digitization.

68 There is growing interest in new builds for the large Westinghouse AP1000, the advanced
69 light-water reactor brought on line at Plant Vogtle in Georgia, and a growing number of advanced
70 nuclear technologies are moving into or through the licensing pipeline. Major new players,
71 including manufacturers, are providing support and financing for new projects.

72 The Trump administration, meanwhile, is also working to advance nuclear on a number of
73 fronts. It is accelerating regulatory reforms, consistent with the ADVANCE Act, for more efficient,
74 risk-informed licensing. It is working to bring in more foreign investment, accelerate innovative
75 new technology demonstrations, and develop small reactors for military bases. How this is going
76 and how it can work more effectively will also be a useful focus for this hearing.

77 Our witnesses today will provide important perspective to help us assess what more may be
78 necessary to ensure our success.

79 Maria Korsnick, the president and CEO of the Nuclear Energy Institute, a nuclear engineer,
80 and former chief nuclear officer and plant operator, will offer the broad industry view for what is
81 necessary for advancing nuclear.

82 John Williams, senior vice president of the Southern Nuclear Operating Company, among

83 other experience overseeing nuclear operations, brings his perspective of having overseen the
84 construction and operation of the first nuclear units in 30 years.

85 Judi Greenwald, president and CEO of the Nuclear Innovation Alliance, will offer the views of
86 a leading Washington nuclear policy organization, which informed some of our work on the
87 ADVANCE Act.

88 And, finally, John Wagner, director of the Idaho National Laboratory, will provide the
89 perspective of the National Lab responsible for a substantial amount of nuclear research and
90 development and what he sees across the landscape of the nuclear policy today.

91 The success of our work in Congress to advance durable nuclear deployment will depend on
92 appropriate and efficient regulatory decisions, dependable supply chains and fuels, predictable
93 construction and deployment costs, and, of course, market demand. This hearing can help us in
94 that work.

95 At this time, my time has expired, and I yield back.

96 And the chair recognizes the gentlelady from Florida's 14th District, the ranking member of
97 the subcommittee, for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

98 Good morning.

99 [The prepared statement of Mr. Latta follows:]

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101 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

102

103 Ms. Castor. Good morning. And Happy New Year to you, Mr. Chairman, and to members
104 and everyone here.

105 We are really hoping for a productive year here at the committee. Americans across the
106 country are counting on us, because, under Republican policies, electric bills are up by 13 percent
107 and more than 80 million Americans are struggling to pay their utility bills.

108 Over the next 5 years, it is predicted that electricity use in the United States will increase by
109 well over 32 percent. In Florida, the electric utilities just instituted the highest rate increases in the
110 history of the State and the highest in the country. So folks are really looking to us to help solve
111 problems.

112 And while nuclear power is a very important piece of the puzzle, what has been working to
113 keep pressure on lower bills and to meet the new demand has been solar, storage, and wind power.
114 Last year, through November, 92 percent of new U.S. power capacity generation was through solar
115 batteries and wind power. Growing solar and wind resources exceeded all new electricity demand
116 globally in the first three quarters of 2025.

117 So that is why we are going to continue to highlight how damaging and expensive it is for
118 Republicans to sabotage cleaner, cheaper energy sources that are keeping the pressure on lower bills
119 across the board.

120 And, unfortunately, it looks like my Republican friends are entering the new year with the
121 same playbook, while they actually should be listening to what power developers are saying and
122 doing. They are not rushing for new nuclear plants; they are building solar and batteries.

123 Now, don't get me wrong. Let's be clear, Democrats strongly support nuclear energy. Just
124 look at the leadership we provided through the Inflation Reduction Act and the ADVANCE Act to help
125 the country deploy more nuclear power. Nuclear energy plays a very important role. It is about
126 20 percent of U.S. electricity generation.

127 But for too long, Republicans have supported nuclear power in theory but failed to follow
128 through as soon as nuclear power starts to compete with fossil fuels.

129 For example, in the House's version of the "Big Ugly Bill" passed out of this committee last
130 year, every Republican on this committee voted to cut back the tax credit to support existing nuclear
131 plants. And Republicans ultimately rescinded billions of dollars to support the Loan Programs
132 Office, the LPO -- those credits in their "Big Ugly Bill" that could have been used to support advanced
133 nuclear financing.

134 All of this occurs as the LPO is on its third temporary leader without a single official
135 nomination for a Director. And reports indicate that the office has lost as much as 60 percent of the
136 professional staff due to voluntary resignations and DOGE cuts.

137 See, nuclear power requires continuity and certainty, which is actively being undermined by
138 this administration's reckless and illegal attacks on energy projects and on the independence of the
139 Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which oversees the safety of our nuclear plants.

140 As nuclear companies watch the Republicans cancel loans for transmission lines, illegally halt
141 offshore wind projects already under construction, and completely upend the regulatory framework
142 that the nuclear industry depends on, why should they trust the Trump administration to be a
143 reliable partner?

144 I certainly hope that this committee can provide greater continuity and push back on a lot of
145 the chaos coming out of the administration.

146 Meanwhile, if you look across to China, they are dominating the build-out of new nuclear
147 power plants, hosting nearly half of the reactors currently under construction.

148 It appears that Trump and the Republicans don't want to compete. Instead, the Trump
149 administration is pursuing a foreign policy fixated on capturing other countries' oil reserves, all to
150 produce more oil that, in the President's own words, will be shipped to China.

151 It just doesn't make sense.

152 We need to build out nuclear energy that will help supply the rise in demand, provide greater
153 certainty, but, under the chaos of this administration, it is going to be difficult.

154 So I am interested in hearing from the experts today on how we get back on track, what this
155 committee can do to help.

156 We need financing in order to build new reactors, standardize deployments of at least 5 to 10
157 reactors with the same design that helps us learn, decrease cost, and catalyze commercial liftoff.
158 And, most importantly, we need confidence in the safety of the reactors. If the American public
159 loses that confidence, then the industry will wither. And, right now, the Trump administration is
160 doing everything within its power to undermine that confidence.

161 So I look forward to hearing from our experts today and encourage everyone interested in
162 this industry to be communicating with this committee on how we can move forward.

163 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

164 [The prepared statement of Ms. Castor follows:]

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166 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

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168 Mr. Latta. Thank you very much.

169 The gentlelady's time has expired and yields back.

170 The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky, the chairman of the full committee,
171 for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

172 The Chair. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

173 And before I begin, it seems like just yesterday we were honoring -- or, remembering Gerry
174 Connolly, and now Doug LaMalfa. It is just such a sad situation for his family, and our thoughts and
175 prayers will recognize his family.

176 I call him the "Man of LaMalfa." And he came to me right after the California redistricting
177 and said, "I would like for you to come to my district," and I said, "Well, Doug, that would be great.
178 I have always wanted to see Mount Shasta." And he says, "Well, I hope you like wine, because I
179 now represent Sonoma."

180 So, anyway. The laughter through tears. Isn't that right, Diana? We talk about -- Dolly
181 Parton said it is an emotion that we -- we have all cried for him, but if you knew him, you would laugh
182 with him. He was a wonderful man from a wonderful place, and he loved this wonderful country.

183 So our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

184 So, now, getting to -- he would want us to get to business. That is what he would say.

185 So we are starting this year with the committee examining how we are going to meet our
186 Nation's growing energy needs. And we have worked to remove barriers to expansion and to
187 prioritize reliable power. We have examined why American energy dominance is essential for a
188 productive, healthy, and secure nation. It is clear that nuclear energy is a key component. Today,
189 we will look at how to expand nuclear further.

190 From 1971 to 1987, America proved its nuclear energy capabilities, with utilities connecting
191 87 nuclear reactors, producing 80 gigawatts of capacity to the grid, a pace of about 60 reactors a

192 year -- a faster and larger deployment than any other nation to date. China has built 58 reactors at
193 an average rate of 3 a year. But that deployment may increase, with more than 30 reactors under
194 construction.

195 This direct competition with the United States in nuclear commerce has huge implications for
196 geopolitics and energy security, underscoring the urgency of promoting American nuclear leadership.

197 The good news is, this committee's work to pass the ADVANCE Act and other policies into law
198 has set the stage for success in the new nuclear era -- removing permitting delays, cutting licensing
199 costs, driving faster efficient decisions, improving international engagement, and incentivizing
200 American supply chains.

201 We are reaching the point that licensing should no longer be a barrier to a nuclear expansion.
202 Success now will more likely rest on construction, finance, and economic factors. Yet, here, too,
203 there is great new promise. Not only are utilities and State policymakers returning to nuclear in
204 turning on retired plants, but new sources of capital investment are engaging. Major technology
205 companies pursuing power for AI data centers have stepped up, as has the oil and gas sector, among
206 others.

207 I want to thank President Trump for his executive orders focused on growing investments in
208 energy technologies. Our job as policymakers is to identify what more needs to be done to
209 accelerate America's new nuclear era in a way that ensures safety, protects taxpayers, and provides
210 national security.

211 Thank you to our witnesses for being here. We look forward to hearing from each of you.

212 And I will yield back.

213 [The prepared statement of the chair follows:]

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215 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

216

217 Mr. Latta. Thank you.

218 The gentleman yields back.

219 And the chair now recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey, the ranking member of the full
220 committee, for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

221 Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

222 The last year has been one of the worst years for the security and safety of America's civilian
223 nuclear fleet since the splitting of the atom in 1945. And that sounds dramatic, but I really believe it
224 is true.

225 President Trump and Energy Secretary Chris Wright have attacked our nuclear regulatory
226 regime and shattered confidence in America's hard-won record on nuclear safety. If the Trump
227 administration does not stop its attacks, American lives will be at risk.

228 And I support safe nuclear energy. It is clean, it runs around the clock, and it provides
229 much-needed energy security. Democrats and Republicans on this committee worked together last
230 Congress to enact important nuclear energy laws, including the ADVANCE Act, a ban on importing
231 Russian uranium, and investment in domestic nuclear fuel-cycle build-out.

232 But nuclear power also needs safeguards so the American people can have confidence that it
233 will operate safely. And based on the Trump administration's actions over the last year, I am deeply
234 concerned that it is putting American lives at risk.

235 And let's recap what has happened this past year.

236 First, President Trump illegally fired, without cause, the former Chair of the Nuclear
237 Regulatory Commission for the first time in its 50-year history. A Republican NRC Commissioner
238 resigned out of disgust for what the Commission had become. And two current NRC
239 Commissioners have warned that they could be fired at any time, for any reason, if they refuse to
240 approve a nuclear reactor due to safety concerns.

241 Any one of these events is cause for major concern, but all three of those events happening
242 within the same year, in my opinion, is a crisis.

243 And, unfortunately, that is not all. The Trump administration issued an executive order
244 demanding that all rulemakings from the NRC pass through the White House's Office of Information
245 and Regulatory Affairs for approval, putting Trump's handpicked lackeys over independent
246 Commissioners confirmed by the United States Senate.

247 And this requirement has shattered the transparency that historically has given the American
248 people assurance that the NRC's rules are strong and effective. Instead, NRC Commissioners are
249 prevented from making public what they are voting on until the White House has approved it. And
250 that is not how an independent agency should work, frankly.

251 And it gets even worse. Last year, employees affiliated with Elon Musk's DOGE were
252 detailed to the NRC from the Department of Energy. They informed the NRC's Chairman and staff
253 that they were expected to, quote, "rubber stamp" reactor designs approved by the Department of
254 Energy or the Department of Defense. They pushed out the NRC's Executive Director for
255 Operations and General Counsel. And worst of all, they seemed to operate without any NRC
256 employees as their supervisors and report directly back to the Department of Energy.

257 Now, I shouldn't have to tell anyone in this room that this is wildly illegal. Fifty years ago,
258 when Congress created the NRC, it explicitly chose to separate it from what would become the
259 Department of Energy. It is crucial that we fully separate the people responsible for aiding and
260 assisting the nuclear industry -- an important job -- from the people in charge of regulating its safety.
261 And yet Secretary Wright has no problem recklessly charging ahead.

262 Now, we have repeatedly asked Secretary Wright for information, including when he was
263 before us last year, but despite his promises then, we have received nothing from the Department of
264 Energy. According to the White House, DOE is supposed to stand up three new nuclear reactors by
265 July 4th of this year, but they have refused to share any information with us.

266 Now, I understand the Trump administration wants to promote nuclear energy, but I have
267 zero confidence that it knows how to do it while maintaining the safety of the American people.
268 We can't afford a single mistake. And the Trump administration is pushing us down a path where
269 mistakes, potentially fatal ones, are becoming increasingly likely.

270 So, if Republicans have any interest in moving nuclear legislation this Congress, Democrats
271 must have full and complete confidence in the safety of our nuclear fleet. Right now, we do not
272 have that. The Trump administration must stop its attacks on the independence of the NRC and
273 genuinely engage with congressional oversight if any progress is to be made. Democrats will not
274 stand for this administration putting Americans' lives at risk.

275 And, with that, Mr. Chairman, I would yield back.

276 [The prepared statement of Mr. Pallone follows:]

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278 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

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280 Mr. Latta. Thank you very much.

281 The gentleman yields back the balance of his time.

282 And, at this time, we thank our witnesses again for joining us to testify before the
283 subcommittee.

284 Each witness will have the opportunity to give an opening statement, followed by a round of
285 questions from the members of the subcommittee.

286 Our witnesses, again, for today are: Ms. Maria Korsnick, the president and CEO of the
287 National Energy Institute; Mr. John Williams, senior vice president of technical services and external
288 affairs at the Southern Company; Ms. Judi Greenwald, president and CEO of the Nuclear Innovation
289 Alliance; and Dr. John Wagner, the director of the Idaho National Laboratory.

290 And before I get to you all, just some quick housekeeping.

291 Please pull the mikes up close to you when you speak.

292 There is a set of lights you will see. You will have 5 minutes each, and when you get to
293 1 minute, it will go yellow. And then it will go red at the minute, so we ask you to finish up your -- if
294 you haven't finished at that time -- your statement.

295 Also, because of the briefing that is going to occur at 11:30, the security briefing, this
296 subcommittee will recess at 11:20, and we will reconvene promptly at 12:45.

297 So we appreciate you all for being here today.

298 And, Ms. Korsnick, you are recognized for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

299

300 **STATEMENTS OF MARIA KORSNICK, PRESIDENT AND CEO, NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE; JOHN**
301 **WILLIAMS, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF TECHNICAL SERVICES AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, SOUTHERN**
302 **COMPANY; JUDI GREENWALD, PRESIDENT AND CEO, NUCLEAR INNOVATION ALLIANCE; AND JOHN**
303 **WAGNER, PH.D., DIRECTOR, IDAHO NATIONAL LABORATORY**

304

305 **STATEMENT OF MARIA KORSNICK**

306

307 Ms. Korsnick. Thank you very much.

308

309 I would like to thank Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, Chairman Latta and
310 Ranking Member Castor, and members of the subcommittee for the opportunity to appear before
311 you today.

311

312

I wish to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation for the committee's continued
leadership on nuclear energy.

313

We are at such a pivotal moment for the Nation's energy system. Domestic electricity
demand is growing faster than at any point in decades, driven by data centers, artificial intelligence,
advanced manufacturing, and electrification. Data center electricity demand alone is projected to
triple.

317

Large electricity users increasingly need power that is reliable, is clean, available 24/7 and at
scale. Many are turning to nuclear power because other resources cannot consistently meet those
requirements.

320

And at the same time, the U.S. is competing globally, not just on energy but on technology, on
manufacturing, on national security, and influence. Winning the AI race with China depends on
access to large volumes of reliable power.

323

The rise in demand is raising concerns about energy prices and affordability. Nuclear's
always-on capability, stable operating costs, and lower transmission needs contribute to lower
overall system costs for consumers. Nuclear power is a solution to the energy and national security
challenges that we face.

327

Our operating nuclear fleet is performing at historically high levels of safety and reliability.
Today, 94 reactors across 28 States provide nearly one-fifth of America's electricity and almost half of

329 its clean generation. As a Nation, we must build on the strong foundation established over the past
330 70 years.

331 Congress's leadership, through extension of the Price-Anderson Act, passage of the ADVANCE
332 Act, and support of the Advanced Reactor Demonstration Program, has helped move next-generation
333 nuclear projects toward deployment.

334 Recent executive actions have reinforced the urgency, with a goal of quadrupling nuclear
335 power by 2050. Operating nuclear plant owners are planning to add more than 8 gigawatts of
336 capacity through generation up-rates and plant restarts and more than 23 gigawatts of new nuclear
337 by 2040. These figures do not include substantial additional capacity being pursued by developers
338 and other companies.

339 The task now is to turn this momentum into deployment at scale. As outlined in my written
340 testimony, the industry has six priorities where continued congressional leadership is essential.

341 First is regulatory modernization. The industry's commitment to safety is non-negotiable.
342 Modernization means focusing regulation where it matters most, on safety-significant issues, while
343 improving predictability and timeliness. Although the NRC has made progress since the passage of
344 the ADVANCE Act, continued congressional oversight is critical to ensure those efforts result in
345 greater efficiency without compromising safety.

346 Second is mitigation of early-mover financial risk. The barrier to new nuclear deployment
347 today is not technology but the concentration of financial risk borne by early projects. A limited but
348 catalytic Federal risk-sharing role can bridge the gap for early projects to increase certainty of
349 completion and drive costs down over time.

350 Third is establishment of the domestic nuclear fuel supply chain. Congress has taken quick
351 and decisive action to authorize and appropriate funds to rebuild domestic fuel supply. The
352 \$2.7 billion in uranium enrichment awards announced just this week are a major step toward turning
353 that bipartisan action into operating capacity. Permitting, licensing, and contracting must keep

354 pace so that these investments can actually create the new capacity, which will reduce our reliance
355 on adversarial suppliers.

356 Fourth, establishment of a durable used-fuel framework. Used fuel is managed safely today,
357 but a long-term national strategy is required to address storage, transportation, recycling, and
358 disposal as part of a comprehensive and integrated system.

359 Also, workforce and supply-chain readiness. Deploying nuclear at scale requires a sustained
360 pipeline of skilled workers and expanded manufacturing. Federal, State, and industry support is
361 essential to prepare the workforce and supply chain needed.

362 And, sixth, U.S. competitiveness in global nuclear markets. Russia is aggressively exporting
363 nuclear technology backed by State financing, and China is well-positioned to become a leading
364 supplier. U.S. leadership requires sound export policy and effective financing tools that allow
365 American companies to compete.

366 Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

367 [The prepared statement of Ms. Korsnick follows:]

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369 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

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371 Mr. Latta. Well, thank you very much.

372 Mr. Williams, you are recognized for 5 minutes for your statement.

373

374 **STATEMENT OF JOHN WILLIAMS**

375

376 Mr. Williams. Chairman Latta, Ranking Member Castor, Full Committee Chairman Guthrie,
377 and Full Committee Ranking Member Pallone, and members of the subcommittee, my name is John
378 Williams, and I serve as the senior vice president for Southern Nuclear Operating Company, a
379 subsidiary of Southern Company.

380 Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about nuclear energy, which is critical to our
381 Nation's economy, energy security, and national security.

382 Southern Company is an innovator in the commercial nuclear industry, having completed the
383 first two next-generation reactors in the United States in over 30 years at Plant Vogtle, Units 3 and 4,
384 where we achieved approximately a 20-percent improvement in cost from the first to the second
385 unit.

386 Southern Company is responding to the significant growth we are seeing in our footprint by
387 optimizing our existing infrastructure and building new infrastructure. We are also capturing this
388 growth for the benefit of all of our customers and ensuring that growth does not come at the
389 expense of affordability.

390 For example, our retail electric rates are more than 10 percent below the national average
391 and have risen less than inflation over the last 5 years. In fact, our two largest subsidiaries,
392 Alabama Power and Georgia Power, have implemented multiyear rate freezes to provide more
393 certainty at a time when other costs are rising.

394 The growing demand for electricity and the leadership of both Congress and the

395 administration has created great interest in new nuclear development. The safe and economic
396 development of new nuclear power is essential to maintaining the United States's global energy
397 dominance.

398 Policy such as the Atomic Energy Advancement Act, an initiative of this subcommittee, which
399 later became the ADVANCE Act, and the President's executive orders requiring regulatory reform at
400 the Nuclear Regulatory Commission have positioned the nuclear industry to capitalize on the Vogtle
401 experience to develop the next fleet of American commercial nuclear plants.

402 We appreciate the efforts of both Congress and the administration to usher in a new era of
403 nuclear construction. However, there are still barriers to new nuclear development that need to be
404 mitigated, including initial capital investment, tail risk associated with macroeconomic events, and
405 substantial credit impact to the developer.

406 I experienced some of the macroeconomic events firsthand during my time on the Vogtle 3
407 and 4 construction project. For example, we experienced a tsunami and resulting nuclear accident
408 in Japan which delayed our license, the bankruptcy of the prime contractor on the site, and the
409 COVID-19 pandemic.

410 Any one of these risks alone could have ended the project, but Southern Company, along with
411 our co-owner's commitment to bringing these units on line for the benefit of our customers,
412 combined with the efforts of Congress, the Georgia Public Service Commission, the Georgia State
413 legislature, the Department of Energy, our labor partners, and both Democrat and Republican
414 administrations, made this project a reality.

415 Today, both units are operating above the industry average and are serving our customers.
416 Because of the construction of Vogtle Units 3 and 4, the Vogtle AP1000s have been licensed, fully
417 tested, and have been operating successfully for several years, which largely eliminates regulatory
418 and technology risk.

419 Additionally, the administration and Congress have also taken meaningful actions to mitigate

420 the risk inherent in large-scale project construction of first-of-a-kind technology. That said, until we
421 reach nth-of-a-kind -- which means the point where a technology and the nuclear construction
422 industry in the U.S. is mature -- additional bipartisan support is needed to mitigate other barriers to
423 entry for new nuclear development.

424 With that in mind, in addition to the DOE EDF program loans, which will be critical to any new
425 nuclear reactor, Congress could promote the following legislative outcomes to help enable new
426 nuclear development: first, enhance the ITCs to moderate the large initial capital investments
427 associated with the construction of new nuclear plants; second, mitigate macroeconomic tail risk;
428 and, third, allow more cash flow during construction through tax credit transferability.

429 Chairman Latta and Ranking Member Castor, thank you for the opportunity to testify before
430 the subcommittee today.

431 Nuclear energy remains one of the most important tools for meeting unprecedented demand
432 in a reliable and affordable way. The leadership and employees of Southern Company are
433 committed to continuing to be part of the solution so that we can deliver on the promise of American
434 technology, as our company has been doing for over 100 years.

435 [The prepared statement of Mr. Williams follows:]

436

437 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

438

439 Mr. Latta. Well, thank you very much for your statement.

440 And, Ms. Greenwald, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

441

442 **STATEMENT OF JUDI GREENWALD**

443

444 Ms. Greenwald. Chairman Latta, Ranking Member Castor, and members of the committee,
445 thank you for the opportunity to testify and for holding this hearing.

446 My name is Judi Greenwald, and I am the president and CEO of the Nuclear Innovation
447 Alliance. NIA is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think-and-do tank. Our mission is to help create the
448 conditions for success for new nuclear reactors so they can play a major role as an energy security
449 and climate solution. We focus our research and advocacy on Nuclear Regulatory Commission
450 modernization, Federal and State policy, private investment, and workforce development.

451 Nuclear reactors help achieve a U.S. energy system that is affordable, reliable, and clean.
452 Nuclear reactors also take up very little land, require minimal transmission build-out, deliver
453 concentrated local economic benefits, and can provide industrial heat and power while reducing
454 emissions.

455 Together, these benefits offer something of value to stakeholders across the political
456 spectrum. In the face of rapidly growing power demand for data centers and other economic
457 engines, nuclear energy is a clean, firm option. That means it can ensure 24/7 reliability as well as
458 climate progress, despite recent reductions in Federal support for other climate solutions.

459 Because of these multiple attributes, nuclear is one of the few energy technologies that
460 enjoys durable bipartisan support. Maintaining that bipartisanship is essential to ensuring stable
461 policy, predictable investment environments, and long-term commercialization pathways that can
462 withstand political cycles.

463 As commercialization efforts accelerate, how we deploy and scale nuclear energy must
464 reinforce this credibility. This means safeguarding regulatory integrity, transparency, and public
465 trust in the NRC. It also means adequate funding and staffing as well as timely and effective
466 implementation of the portfolio of nuclear commercialization policies and programs at the
467 Department of Energy and across the Federal Government. DOE's loan guarantees, reactor
468 demonstrations, and fuels programs merit especially high priority.

469 Also, the scale, pace, and ambition of new DOE and DOD reactor programs must be matched
470 with robust oversight. The NRC boasts a dedicated, highly technical staff and a legacy of overseeing
471 a remarkably safe nuclear industry. As an independent, bipartisan commission, it has a long history
472 of remaining mission-focused and relatively insulated from political pressure, strengthening its
473 technical credibility, international respect, and public trust.

474 NIA has long been an advocate for NRC to improve its efficiency while maintaining robust
475 nuclear safety. We believe NRC can and must do both.

476 This committee did tremendous work developing the ADVANCE Act, which was signed into
477 law in 2024. This statute directs NRC to improve reactor licensing efficiency, modernize
478 environmental reviews, reduce reactor licensing fees, enhance workforce capacity, and revise its
479 mission statement. It is critical that NRC fully implement this law and that Congress conduct
480 oversight to ensure its success.

481 Government, industry, and civil society must work together to sustain public support through
482 transparent safety rulemakings and practices, reasonable costs, successful early-mover projects, and
483 community engagement.

484 The world is moving quickly to commercialize new reactors. Responsibly deploying U.S.
485 technologies at home strengthens our ability to lead abroad, set high standards, and counter
486 strategic competitors.

487 This is a pivotal moment for nuclear energy. Major technological advances across public,

488 private, and academic sectors have driven progress. New reactor developers are introducing
489 significant commercial innovations. Private financiers, along with industrial and data center energy
490 users, are making major investments. Public support for nuclear energy is growing. We are in the
491 midst of a remarkably positive policy environment.

492 The secret to successful U.S. energy innovation and commercialization has always been a
493 whole-of-society effort with private-sector leadership and effective government enabling.
494 Congress's enactment of a series of major laws over the past 7 years, together with recent ambitious
495 nuclear energy executive orders, has set the stage for success.

496 This committee has played a crucial role in bringing us to where we are today, reflecting a
497 shared commitment to innovation, energy security, safety, and environmental protection.

498 I urge you to ensure through the exercise of your legislative and oversight responsibilities that
499 the U.S. Government has the people, the resources, and the public trust essential to enable new
500 nuclear energy to play a major role in an affordable, reliable, and clean U.S. energy system.

501 Thank you.

502 [The prepared statement of Ms. Greenwald follows:]

503

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506 Mr. Latta. Well, thank you very much for your opening statement.

507 And, Dr. Wagner, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

508

509 **STATEMENT OF JOHN WAGNER, PH.D.**

510

511 Dr. Wagner. Chairman Latta, Ranking Member Castor, and members of the subcommittee,
512 thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

513 My name is John Wagner. I am the Director of the Idaho National Laboratory, the Nation's
514 center for nuclear energy research and development. I would like to note at the forefront, although
515 I am the Director of the laboratory, I am not a Federal employee and I cannot speak for the
516 Department of Energy.

517 Throughout my long career so far, I have had the privilege of being involved with the design,
518 analysis, and safety of a variety of nuclear technologies. From my early work in industry to my
519 nearly 17 years at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory before becoming the leader of the Nation's
520 nuclear laboratory, I have had a lot of experience in all aspects of this. And so, again, I really
521 appreciate this committee taking the interest in this topic.

522 We stand at an unprecedented inflection point for American nuclear energy. For the first
523 time in decades, market forces -- first time in my career, I will say -- market forces, national security
524 imperatives, and Federal policy have achieved remarkable alignment. The question is no longer
525 whether America needs nuclear energy, but how much, how quickly, and how to make it happen.

526 The urgency cannot be overstated. As was mentioned by several who spoke before me, to
527 put this in perspective, the United States commissioned over 100 nuclear power reactors between
528 1970 and 1990. Yet, in the more than three decades since, we have brought on only two new
529 reactors -- thank you to Southern Company -- while more than a dozen have shut down.

530 Meanwhile, China and Russia have advanced their nuclear capabilities and now account for
531 94 percent of all reactors under construction worldwide. China is on pace to surpass the U.S. in
532 nuclear generating capacity by 2030, the first time any nation will have exceeded the United States in
533 nuclear capacity.

534 We must reclaim nuclear leadership to achieve American energy dominance and project
535 American values and standards globally. To do so, the administration has outlined a goal of
536 expanding from 100 to 400 gigawatts of nuclear capacity by 2050, requiring power up-rates, reactor
537 restarts, advance reactor deployment, and at least 10 new large reactors under construction by 2030.

538 You, Congress, thankfully, has provided critical bipartisan support through landmark
539 legislation, the ADVANCE Act, the Prohibiting Russian Uranium Imports Act, and substantial
540 investments through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act.
541 These achievements demonstrate remarkable bipartisan, bicameral alignment for nuclear energy.

542 At Idaho National Laboratory, where nuclear electricity was first demonstrated in 1951, real
543 progress is happening.

544 Under Executive Order 14301, DOE established the Reactor Pilot Program. Ten companies,
545 with 11 projects, have been selected. We are accelerating progress towards deployment while
546 maintaining our high levels of nuclear safety and nuclear security. And I am optimistic we will see
547 three new reactors critical by July 4th of this year.

548 For context, it has been nearly 50 years since a new reactor achieved first criticality at
549 INL -- 50 years.

550 Our reactor test beds are advancing rapidly. DOME, which is a repurpose of the EBR-II
551 containment structure, will be ready for its first demonstration system in April of this year. LOTUS
552 will host the Molten Chloride Reactor Experiment in 2028. Our MARVEL microreactor, which has
553 reestablished our ability to develop nuclear reactor systems, is targeting initial criticality this year.
554 Project PELE, the mobile microreactor for the Department of Defense, will begin testing in early

555 2028. Companies Aalo and Oklo broke ground at INL for their reactors this past fall.

556 But, of course, as others have mentioned, challenges remain. We need to build nuclear
557 commercial power reactors at scale, and we need to get started now. We need to continue building
558 domestic fuel-cycle capabilities. Notably, just this week, DOE awarded \$2.7 billion to expand
559 domestic uranium enrichment capability. We need to continue progress on regulatory efficiency.
560 And we need to update the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, which reflects priorities from four decades ago.

561 I would be remiss if I didn't emphasize that state-of-the-art research and development
562 infrastructure is essential to achieving our goals. No other nation possesses facilities comparable to
563 our test reactors, hot cells, and fuel-fabrication infrastructure. But these facilities are aging and are
564 at capacity, so sustained investment is required.

565 In closing, the technology exists, the market demand is real, the policy framework is
566 emerging, and private investment has mobilized. At INL, we are rising to meet this moment,
567 accelerating reactor demonstrations, strengthening fuel-cycle expertise, developing workforce, and
568 embracing AI, while maintaining an uncompromising commitment to safety and excellence.

569 I want to thank you again for the opportunity to be before you today, and I look forward to
570 your questions.

571 [The prepared statement of Dr. Wagner follows:]

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575 Mr. Latta. Well, thank you very much.

576 And this will conclude the opening statements from our witnesses, and we will now go into
577 the question-and-answer portion of the hearing from our members.

578 I will recognize myself for 5 minutes.

579 And, from the testimony, there are many positive elements on the nuclear front. It is clear
580 the Trump administration's actions focusing on nuclear offer potential for meaningful reform if
581 implemented properly.

582 Just without -- maybe just from a show of hands, do you all agree with that statement?

583 Thank you.

584 Another quick question I always ask people in this committee, just quickly: Does this
585 country need to have more power or less power being produced? Do we have to have more or
586 less?

587 Ms. Korsnick?

588 Ms. Korsnick. More.

589 Mr. Latta. Mr. Williams?

590 Mr. Williams. We need more power.

591 Mr. Latta. Ms. Greenwald?

592 Ms. Greenwald. More.

593 Mr. Latta. Dr. Wagner?

594 Dr. Wagner. Lots more.

595 Mr. Latta. Thank you.

596 Success will require proper implementation, a robust workforce, and collaboration between
597 the Department of Energy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

598 Dr. Wagner, will you speak to what you are seeing regarding collaboration between the DOE

599 and NRC on the regulatory front?

600 Dr. Wagner. Yes, I can. I am seeing tremendous collaboration between the two agencies.

601 As they look into understanding -- so maybe for context, I should say, the Department of
602 Energy has a set of requirements and structures to ensure the safety of nuclear systems operated on
603 behalf of the Department of Energy that have been developed over a lot of years, that are flexible
604 relative to the different reactor types that the Department of Energy operates.

605 In contrast, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has a different mission for commercial
606 reactor power, and so they have a different set of regulations.

607 And so, as a number of the companies are working with the Department of Energy to
608 demonstrate unique new systems, they are going through the DOE process, and so the NRC is
609 engaging in that process to understand those technologies and be better prepared so that when
610 those technologies come to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission they will be prepared.

611 So, through a number of memorandums of understanding, agreements on how they are
612 partnering on these advanced reactor projects, I am seeing tremendous positive cooperation.

613 Mr. Latta. Let me follow up with you. Do you see any of the collaborations undermining
614 the NRC's licensing expertise in any way?

615 Dr. Wagner. I am not aware of any.

616 Mr. Latta. Okay. Thank you.

617 Mr. Williams, you note in your testimony that the second Vogtle unit was completed at
618 20-percent lower cost and took half the testing at startup. There are a number of potential new
619 builds under consideration for AP1000s like at Vogtle. Can you outline how far costs could come
620 down with three or four new builds?

621 Mr. Williams. Certainly, sir. Thank you for the question.

622 You know, as I mentioned, we did see significant cost reductions and schedule improvements
623 from 3 to 4, which you expect as you implement a first-of-a-kind technology, moving to

624 second-of-a-kind technology, moving on to, you know, third-of-a-kind, ultimately to nth-of-a-kind.

625 We think there could be significant improvements. We think you would see similar savings
626 for the next build of an AP1000, and those savings would continue until you reach some equilibrium
627 at nth-of-a-kind.

628 There was a report by the DOE last year, the DOE "Liftoff" report, that laid out some of
629 that -- the estimates for cost completion. We agree with that report in terms of the estimates for
630 how far costs could come down for those units.

631 Mr. Latta. Let me follow up with you. What would that mean for competitiveness with
632 natural-gas units?

633 Mr. Williams. It is essential that we reach those nth-of-a-kind costs. For us, as we do
634 low-cost system planning within our market structure, it is essential that we reach those
635 nth-of-a-kind costs for those technologies to be competitive with, for instance, natural gas.

636 Mr. Latta. Thank you.

637 Dr. Wagner, what are you seeing with respect to advances on the reprocessing front? And
638 what policies may have to come to change to encourage cost-effective reprocessing and recycling?

639 Dr. Wagner. So it is actually a very exciting area right now in terms of a number of private
640 companies that are developing technologies that they think can make recycling commercially viable.
641 So we are working with a number of those companies to develop, test, and demonstrate those
642 technologies that build on a legacy of technologies that have been developed by the National
643 Laboratories and beyond. And so there is a very active area that I could not have said existed even
644 a few years ago in that space.

645 In terms of policy reform, the Nuclear Waste Policy Act did not envision commercial
646 spent-fuel recycling. And, therefore, I would suggest that it needs to be revised to incentivize and
647 support recycling.

648 Mr. Latta. Well, thank you.

649 My time is about to expire, but I will submit the rest of my questions to you all.

650 [The information follows:]

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654 Mr. Latta. And, at this time, I will now recognize the ranking member of the subcommittee,
655 the gentlelady from Florida, for 5 minutes for questions.

656 Ms. Castor. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

657 Dr. Wagner, thank you for going into greater detail on the test demonstration nuclear
658 reactors that are underway. You said 10 companies and 11 projects are currently shooting for this
659 July 4th, 2026, goal. Can you go into greater detail?

660 Dr. Wagner. Sure. And I would say that there is a lot of detail out there, and I would be
661 happy to follow up with, like, written detail if that would be helpful.

662 Ms. Castor. And would you agree to come and brief the committee staff and committee
663 members?

664 Dr. Wagner. Of course. I would be happy to, and --

665 Ms. Castor. Okay. Great.

666 Dr. Wagner. -- thank you for asking for that.

667 Would you like a little bit more now or --

668 Ms. Castor. Yes.

669 Dr. Wagner. Okay. All right.

670 So, as you mentioned, the Reactor Pilot Program was established out of the executive order
671 by the Department of Energy, and the goal is to have three new reactor systems critical by July 4th of
672 2026.

673 I would like to take a moment to say, what does that mean? I get a lot of questions about
674 what does criticality mean versus, say, commercial power generation. Criticality is a step in the
675 pathway of a nuke system towards a power generation system. So it is a normal progression of the
676 technology testing and demonstration that occurs. So it is sort of an early step in that process.

677 Ten companies, as you mentioned, have 11 different reactors that are shooting for this

678 July 4th. I doubt they will all make it, but the thing that is really exciting is that I do think three can
679 make it, and the others will follow quickly thereafter.

680 So, while July 4th is a major milestone, you know, there is an August and a September and an
681 October that will follow, and I think we will see quite a number of these reactors, again, as their
682 initial demonstration in 2026 that will lead to commercial deployment.

683 Ms. Castor. And how many of those projects are supported by the Loan Program Office?

684 Dr. Wagner. I am not aware that any of them are supported by the Loan Program Office. I
685 will, you know, put a question -- you know, I am not aware that any --

686 Ms. Castor. What is the funding mix of their private-sector contributions versus
687 U.S.-taxpayer contributions?

688 Dr. Wagner. So there is some variations, but they are majority private-sector-funded.

689 So, when these projects were selected by the Department of Energy, what they sort of won
690 was access to support and DOE licensing and facilities to the extent that we have it, but they were
691 responsible for their own costs for these projects.

692 Ms. Castor. Great.

693 Well, we will look forward to the detailed briefing moving ahead.

694 Dr. Wagner. Yes. Thank you.

695 Ms. Castor. Ms. Greenwald, you mentioned in your testimony that, historically, Congress
696 chose to separate out the role of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission ensuring the safety of nuclear
697 reactors from the role of the Department of Energy, which conducts research and promotes the
698 industry.

699 Why is that separation important, and how does it help maintain confidence in the safety of
700 our civilian nuclear fleet?

701 Ms. Greenwald. Thank you for the question.

702 It is all about public trust. And the decision that was made to separate AC into -- sorry for

703 the alphabet soup -- to NRC and what was then ERDA, which became DOE -- but to separate out the
704 NRC with the agency that became DOE, that was actually supported by both supporters and
705 opponents of nuclear energy, or people who were concerned about nuclear energy, because they
706 thought it would increase public trust in the technology and they also thought it would give an
707 opportunity to make the case both for and against particular technology decisions.

708 So I think it was, at the time -- and this was in 1974, in the Energy Reorganization Act, that
709 that decision was made.

710 Ms. Castor. What about today, because of the assault on the NRC, the kind of bigfooting by
711 DOE of the NRC, our safety regulatory agency, what is the risk going forward?

712 Ms. Greenwald. So we definitely want to make sure that we maintain this separation and
713 maintain NRC's independence.

714 And that is -- we think it is highly important, as -- we have a paper that we are happy to
715 provide for the record -- I may have included a site in our testimony -- where we looked at the, sort
716 of, history of the authorities that DOD, DOE, and NRC have had. And DOE and DOD have had
717 authorities to oversee and authorize, or allow for, projects for quite some time. And so they do
718 have experience. They have some different rules and approaches, but it is possible for this to work
719 out quite well.

720 And I actually agree with Dr. Wagner that they are making progress on making sure that this
721 goes well, and NRC, in fact, is --

722 Ms. Castor. With my last 15 seconds, do you --

723 Ms. Greenwald. Oh, sorry.

724 Ms. Castor. -- are you concerned at all with the loss of professional and tactical staff --

725 Ms. Greenwald. Yes.

726 Ms. Castor. -- at the NRC and DOE?

727 DOE has lost over 3,500 professional staff over the past year, including the Office of Nuclear

728 Energy.

729 Ms. Greenwald. Yes. This is, you know, why I am focusing so much on that in my
730 testimony, is that we really want to make sure that both DOE and NRC are sufficiently staffed to
731 capably exercise these responsibilities and implement these important programs.

732 Ms. Castor. Thank you very much.

733 I yield back.

734 Mr. Latta. The gentlelady's time has expired and yields back.

735 The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky, the chair of the full committee, for
736 5 minutes for questions.

737 The Chair. Thank you very much.

738 I am old enough to remember back in the 1970s about when those bills were passed and
739 movies like "The China Syndrome" and those kind of things came out. I was a kid during the time,
740 but I remember it. And I remember the fear that people had, some legitimate -- [inaudible] had
741 some issues -- but that was also stoked. And it set us back as developing our nuclear energy.

742 And so what we need to make sure people know, that there is a regulatory structure in place,
743 there is technology in place. It is a different world.

744 And people ask me all the time, can SMRs, for instance, be safe? And I say, well, every -- you
745 put SMRs next to the most deadliest payload known to mankind, put a bunch of -- the best in the
746 world -- well, the best would go on to the Army -- but the second-best in the world, in the Navy -- I
747 am kidding. I love the Navy. Think about 18- to 25-year-olds, put them underwater, and send
748 them around the world. You have 18- to 25-year-olds running it, governed by -- or, commanded by
749 35- to 40-year-olds.

750 And so we can do this; we can do it well. And we need to do it and do it well.

751 So, Mr. Williams, you were just directly involved with the NRC, Nuclear Regulatory
752 Commission, the construction of the Vogtle units. Can you speak briefly whether NRC was a

753 problem in that process? And what is your current experience with NRC given the reforms?

754 Mr. Williams. Sure. Thanks for your question, Congressman.

755 You know, I could say, as we built Vogtle 3 and 4, we said that safety and quality was our most
756 important priority during that project. We did that and have demonstrated that through its
757 operation.

758 I can say that, throughout the construction, we had more than 150,000 inspection hours by
759 the Nuclear Regulatory Commission of the construction process, but at no point in time did their
760 oversight -- was it part of the challenges that we experienced at Vogtle 3 and 4. It was constructive,
761 and they provided the necessary oversight necessary to make sure.

762 I would say, in recent experience related to our operation, we continue to see a strong
763 regulator. We have our resident inspectors on site performing oversight of our day-to-day
764 activities. We have robust and challenging discussions with the staff at the Commission for license
765 amendments that are there. So we continue to see a very strong regulator.

766 The Chair. That is good, because we need that, because we need people to have confidence
767 that we can do this. And we absolutely have to have that.

768 So, last year, Secretary Wright said, "The U.S. is ushering in a true nuclear renaissance.
769 Meeting this demand will require strong partnerships with our allies and collaboration with the
770 private-sector innovators."

771 So, Ms. Korsnick and Mr. Williams -- Ms. Korsnick first -- and both of you answer this:
772 Significant investments in U.S. nuclear fuel are currently underway, and additional funding for
773 projects has been announced this week by DOE, including two in Paducah, Kentucky.

774 Nevertheless, will continued -- so here is the question -- will continued supply of fuel service
775 from closely allied nations like Canada, the U.K., Europe, continue to be important to the operation
776 of the U.S. nuclear fleet for the next generation? So is it going to be important that we work with
777 our allies to get this done?

778 Ms. Korsnick. Absolutely. You need a diversified fuel supply. And working with our allies
779 on both natural uranium as well as conversion and enrichment, I think, is critical going forward.

780 The Chair. Thank you.

781 Mr. Williams?

782 Mr. Williams. I agree completely with Ms. Korsnick.

783 The Chair. Okay.

784 And so this is for all of you. Let me start with -- since you guys have answered, we will start
785 with Ms. Greenwald.

786 With the growth of AI and advanced manufacturing demand, combined with congressional
787 action to streamline licensing, what opportunities are you seeing for changing some of our
788 approaches to regulation or financing and help (ph) deployment?

789 Ms. Greenwald, do you have any comments on that? And then we will do Dr. Wagner.

790 Ms. Greenwald. Yeah. So, actually, you are doing a lot on AI (ph). I will just say very
791 briefly: So we see AI helping in both directions or being extremely relevant in, sort of, both sides of
792 this issue.

793 One, it is creating a lot of energy demand, and it needs a lot of reliable power, and nuclear
794 energy can provide that.

795 Also, AI provides a lot of tools to do things more efficiently. And we can apply that in the
796 design process, in the licensing process, and in the operations process to make sure that we can use
797 these artificial-intelligence tools to do all of this work better and more efficiently.

798 The Chair. Thank you.

799 Dr. Wagner?

800 Dr. Wagner. I think Ms. Greenwald said it well. You know, AI needs nuclear power for us
801 to enable continued U.S. leadership in the AI for our infrastructure. And we see a lot of
802 opportunities that we are pursuing now for AI to accelerate nuclear energy design, analysis, safety

803 reviews, and ultimate manufacturing and operations.

804 So we are looking at AI tools and capabilities and robotics across that entire spectrum. As a
805 National Laboratory, that is the type of things that we do.

806 The Chair. All right. Thank you.

807 And my time is almost expired, so I will yield back. Thank you.

808 Mr. Latta. Thank you very much.

809 The gentleman yields back.

810 And the chair now recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey, the ranking member of the full
811 committee, for 5 minutes for questions.

812 Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

813 One of the most alarming ways that the NRC's independence has been undermined -- and I
814 talked about this in my opening remarks -- is the presence of staffers affiliated with DOGE and
815 Department of Energy who aren't responsible to anyone at the NRC. But, unfortunately,
816 Department of Energy has refused to answer any of our questions on this topic.

817 So let me go to Ms. Greenwald.

818 I thought you gave an excellent answer to Ranking Member Castor on the importance of
819 separating NRC and DOE's roles. Could you talk about how full transparency from the Department
820 of Energy on its role in the licensing process is important to public confidence in the licensing
821 process?

822 Ms. Greenwald. Yes. We do think that transparency is one of the hallmarks of achieving
823 public trust, and we would like to see more transparency about the role of DOE staffers at NRC.

824 We also think, actually, on the issue around these -- DOE authorization of reactors -- which is
825 something that has happened for a long time but hasn't happened in the past as often and is, with
826 this great pace and intensity, is happening now -- it is really important that DOE be more transparent
827 than perhaps it has been used to historically.

828 And we actually think DOE has a pretty good story to tell and that they should be transparent
829 about it. For example, they are actually borrowing and NRC is lending 12 staffers from NRC to help
830 DOE with these reviews. And then they are doing it independently, and then it will come
831 back -- when this reactor, if it becomes commercial and it goes to NRC for licensing, then the NRC will
832 have institutional knowledge and also be able to make its independent decision about whether this
833 design is ready for commercial application.

834 Mr. Pallone. Thank you.

835 Now, you also mention in your written testimony that, and I quote, "eroding public trust in
836 agencies like NRC and DOE would set industry back, not spur it forward," end of quote.

837 So, again, would you talk about why it is so important that the public have confidence in both
838 the NRC and DOE and how the survival of the nuclear industry depends entirely upon public
839 confidence that the industry is safe?

840 Ms. Greenwald. Yeah. And I think this has been a longstanding situation for this industry
841 and for the public, that there is this mutual benefit of having an independent regulator and a
842 successful industry. The industry needs that seal of approval for it to have social license to operate
843 and to have public support.

844 It also really helps us in our role in the world, to make sure that we can export technology,
845 because the NRC seal of approval really helps companies to be able to have a trusted technology that
846 they can sell abroad as well as at home.

847 RPTR DEAN

848 EDTR HOFSTAD

849 [11:15 a.m.]

850 Mr. Pallone. All right. Well, I think the point you are making is very important, so I just
851 wanted to make sure everyone here agrees on the panel.

852 Just a quick "yes" or "no" from each of our remaining witnesses: Do you it is vital to the
853 American nuclear industry that the general public thinks it is safe and has confidence in the
854 government's nuclear safety regulators? And if you would just answer "yes" or "no."

855 I will start with Ms. Korsnick.

856 Ms. Korsnick. Yes, absolutely.

857 Mr. Pallone. All right.

858 Mr. Williams?

859 Mr. Williams. Yes.

860 Mr. Pallone. And, lastly, Dr. Wagner?

861 Dr. Wagner. Yes.

862 Mr. Pallone. All right. Well, I think that is good to hear. I just hope that the White House
863 and Department of Energy are listening.

864 I mean, the problem that I see is that, you know, the Trump administration's actions
865 undermine the independence of the NRC. And it is really alarming to me how much they have tried
866 to do that and have succeeded in doing it.

867 And I just want to reiterate again, if the Trump administration and the DOE do not stop
868 undermining the independence of our safety nuclear regulator, you know, in the case of the NRC,
869 there is no longer going to be bipartisan support.

870 I mean, you know, there are a lot of people out there, in my district and elsewhere, that just
871 don't want nuclear energy. And I have been supportive of it and we have been supportive of it as

872 Democrats, mostly, on a bipartisan basis. But all that is linked to safety. If anything happens that,
873 you know, gives the impression or actually makes it so that people's lives are at risk or we have some
874 kind of incident, that is going to be the end of it. We will -- I will speak for myself -- wouldn't be
875 able to support it anymore.

876 So, you know, that is why this is so crucial. That is why I keep bringing it up. It is just
877 crucial. And it is just like President Trump's administration just, like, willy-nilly seem to think, "Oh,
878 none of this matters, and we will do this or that," and lack of transparency. All this is very
879 detrimental, in my opinion, to the future of nuclear energy, which is so important as a clean energy
880 source for, you know, the mixture. So that is why I keep emphasizing it.

881 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

882 Mr. Latta. Thank you.

883 The gentleman yields back.

884 And the chair now recognizes the vice chair of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Texas,
885 for 5 minutes for questions.

886 Mr. Weber. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

887 Dr. Wagner, I am going to come to you. And welcome back again. We are glad to see you
888 here.

889 As chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy in Science, Space, and Technology, I am
890 extremely focused on the work of our 17 National Laboratories. So, specifically at Idaho National
891 Lab, can you expand on the work being done at the fuel cycle facility and how these efforts can
892 actually lead to developments in the reprocessing and management of spent nuclear fuel?

893 Dr. Wagner. Yes. Thank you, Vice Chairman Weber. And thank you for your support of
894 the National Laboratories. It is a pleasure to be here and to see you. And thanks for the question,
895 because it allows me to get into that area a little bit more in terms of fuel recycling.

896 So, while we don't, as a Nation, recycle commercial spent nuclear fuel, at the laboratory we

897 have been recycling spent nuclear fuel for many, many decades. Now, what is the difference?

898 The difference is that these are Department of Energy's reactor spent nuclear fuel, not commercial
899 spent nuclear fuel. And so that has been our focus.

900 And so, at the fuel conditioning facility that you referred to, what we are doing there is we are
901 recycling spent Experimental Breeder Reactor-II fuel, so back from the 1990s and prior. This is
902 high-enriched uranium, so this is actually very valuable material.

903 And so what we do there is we separate the uranium from the remainder of the material, so
904 that what we end up with is high-enriched uranium. We down-blend that with natural uranium to
905 below 20 weight percent, something called high-assay low-enriched uranium, or HALEU, which you
906 hear about from time to time.

907 And why is that important? One, it turns a waste product into a valuable commodity for
908 advanced reactor testing and demonstration. And, specifically, part of that material is going to be
909 fabricated at the Materials and Fuels Complex at the laboratory for Oklo's first reactor demonstration
910 on our site.

911 When we're done recycling all of the material from EBR-II, we will result in nearly 10 metric
912 tons of high-assay LEU. Given that we don't currently generate significant quantities of high-assay
913 LEU in this country -- although we are working to change that -- this is really important material for
914 testing new reactors.

915 Mr. Weber. Oh. Well, thanks for that.

916 There are some companies out there -- are you familiar with the Curio company, one that is
917 working on reprocessing all this stuff, even on a global scale? So we want to make sure that, you
918 know, when we hit the market, we want to have companies and be able to work on that. Are you
919 familiar --

920 Dr. Wagner. Yes, I am. And we are working with Curio and we are working with several
921 other companies --

922 Mr. Weber. Okay.

923 Dr. Wagner. -- that are developing -- you know, maybe let me say as well, we invented
924 recycling in this country. We often talk about other countries' recycling, but we developed those
925 technologies --

926 Mr. Weber. I thought Smokey the Bear did back in the 1960s. Keep going.

927 Dr. Wagner. Okay. I am not sure about that.

928 Mr. Weber. I know. I know.

929 Dr. Wagner. But, at any rate, so what is happening now is that, while we have been
930 recycling DOE-owned materials, companies like Curio and others are innovating on how to improve
931 those processes to enable commercial recycling to be economically viable. And that is a really great
932 development to see.

933 Mr. Weber. No, you bet, and glad to see that.

934 Ms. Korsnick, I am going to come to you.

935 Within President Trump's recent executive orders focused on nuclear energy, a national goal
936 was set to have 10 new large nuclear reactors under construction by 2030 and to expand U.S. nuclear
937 energy capacity from approximately 100 gigawatts today to 400 gigawatts by 2050.

938 While the administration has indicated that advanced reactors, including Generation III-Plus
939 reactors like small modular reactors, SMRs, will be critical in reaching these goals, no national target
940 for deployment for this reactor technology has been established.

941 What can Congress do to set a level playing field to make that happen?

942 Ms. Korsnick. Well, they set the goal to quadruple. So I guess that is really the target that
943 we are going after that was sent in the executive orders.

944 I think as you all know, I think deployment is going to be challenging. But through all of the
945 testimony that you have heard today, you can appreciate that we are laying the groundwork for
946 large-scale deployment. And I think we will have significant deployment in the 2030s and 2040s.

947 Mr. Weber. Are you aware -- and this is really a question for all of the panelists. Are you
948 aware that there are some public -- there are many -- may be public and some political organizations,
949 even elected officials, who raise unfounded concerns about that goal? Are you aware of that?

950 Ms. Korsnick. Unfounded concerns about what, sir?

951 Mr. Weber. Hitting that goal that we are talking about.

952 Ms. Korsnick. Well, I think there are concerns just because it is so hard, right? It is an
953 incredibly aggressive goal.

954 And I think we shouldn't, in my opinion, get wrapped around do we meet that number. The
955 point is, the pursuit of that number is driving the right behavior.

956 Mr. Weber. We can do it safely and cleanly, can't we?

957 Ms. Korsnick. That is right.

958 Mr. Weber. Let the record show that, Mr. Chairman.

959 I yield back my time.

960 Mr. Latta. Thank you very much.

961 The gentleman yields back.

962 The chair recognizes the gentleman from California's 50th District for 5 minutes for questions.

963 And I mentioned a little bit earlier, we are going to take a recess to go over so members can
964 attend the hearing and then return promptly at 12:45 to resume.

965 The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes for questions.

966 Mr. Peters. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

967 I want to start by thanking the chairman of the committee, Mr. Guthrie, for acknowledging
968 Doug LaMalfa, my classmate and fellow Californian. He was well-regarded by everyone on both
969 sides of the aisle, very well-liked and very well-respected, and we are going to miss him. And we
970 want to send our love and prayers to his family.

971 So, for today, we need to address the serious problems facing our grid: significant low

972 growth, extreme weather, cyber and physical threats. Our grid is old, it is small, and it is dumb.
973 And nuclear energy will play a strong role in making it bigger, newer, and smarter, but we have a lot
974 of work to do.

975 I just want to call attention to the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station, or SONGS, just
976 outside my district in San Diego. The spent nuclear fuel there is within 100 feet of the Pacific
977 Ocean, sits near dense population centers, an active military base, and multiple fault lines. It is
978 definitely not an ideal place for it to be.

979 What happens to that nuclear fuel matters greatly to my district. And my constituents,
980 along with many others around the country, know we need long-term solutions for spent nuclear fuel
981 storage.

982 The Nuclear REFUEL Act, which Chairman Latta and I introduced last Congress, would
983 streamline the development of advanced nuclear while addressing the storage issue by making it
984 easier to reprocess and recycle spent fuels for continued use.

985 Beyond domestic supply and security, we need to maintain our position as a global leader in
986 nuclear energy development. The bipartisan ADVANCE Act was a good start. We have to do
987 more.

988 Unfortunately, a key aspect of my Global Nuclear Energy Assessment and Cooperation Act,
989 which would have authorized DOE to train foreign energy experts in allied countries, was removed
990 from the ADVANCE Act.

991 If our goal is to build American leadership in the nuclear energy space and to compete across
992 the globe with Russia and China to help other countries to build reactors and meet their energy
993 needs, we have ensure those countries have the expertise required to maintain and operate those
994 nuclear reactors responsibly.

995 And it should go without saying, but I guess this week it doesn't go without saying, that we
996 need allies around the world to be able to win this war with China and Russia, and we ought not to

997 take those alliances for granted, let alone do things that would be absolutely inconsistent with
998 friendship.

999 We have to focus on how we can work with our allies to figure out how to make nuclear
1000 leadership in nuclear energy -- how to project nuclear American leadership instead of allowing our
1001 competitors to flood the zone with dirty and dated reactors.

1002 Ms. Greenwald, can you just talk a little bit about the technical and economic barriers that
1003 hold back spent-fuel recycling, which would address some of the growing spent-fuel concerns we
1004 have?

1005 Ms. Greenwald. Certainly. Thank you for the question. And thank you for your
1006 leadership on all these legislative efforts. We really appreciate your thoughtful approach to these
1007 issues.

1008 We actually have a great report for you, which is a thing I say a lot at NIA, and it is called
1009 "Recycling Reconsidered." And I highly recommend it to you, and maybe it is a great title for a
1010 hearing.

1011 Basically, what has happened over the past few decades since the U.S. decided not to pursue
1012 recycling is that we have seen a lot of change, we have seen a lot of technology innovation, we have
1013 seen a lot of businesses who are interested in using the isotopes that are embedded in spent nuclear
1014 fuel and using it for good purposes like medical uses and other industrial demand.

1015 So we actually see a lot of change, and so I think it is time to look again and see whether we
1016 can do a good job of recycling with different types of approaches, different technical approaches,
1017 different business approaches.

1018 Certainly, anything that we would have to do on recycling, we would have make sure that it
1019 meets safeguards -- robust safeguards and security standards --

1020 Mr. Peters. Yeah. I guess -- those are, sort of, good comments. They are sort of general.
1021 Are there specific things you would like to see the country do to help support recycling?

1022 Ms. Greenwald. Yeah. One we have in this report that I will be happy to get to you -- one
1023 of the recommendations, for example, we have is, we think the Loan Program Office should actually
1024 be open to lending to the development of these types of technologies. We think that would be a
1025 very -- we are big on innovation at NIA, and that would be a great way to prompt this innovation.

1026 We also understand that the administration is working on a total spent-fuel strategy,
1027 including recycling. And we have made recommendations in that report that we hope will inform
1028 their work.

1029 Mr. Peters. Okay.

1030 Ms. Greenwald. And so having the strategy broadly, and also some specific things they
1031 could do.

1032 Mr. Peters. Great.

1033 I think there is concern on this committee about investing in innovation for mature
1034 technologies. This is one where I think it would benefit the country and take a lot of pressure off
1035 places like San Onofre and others.

1036 Mr. Chairman, thank you for the hearing, and I yield back.

1037 Mr. Latta. The gentleman yields back the balance of his time.

1038 And, as I mentioned earlier, the subcommittee will stand in recess until 12:45.

1039 Thank you.

1040 [Recess.]

1041 [12:50 p.m.]

1042 Mr. Latta. Well, good afternoon. I would like to resume our subcommittee hearing.

1043 And, at this time, the chair recognizes for 5 minutes the gentleman from Ohio's 12th District.

1044 Mr. Balderson. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1045 And thank you all for being here today. It is very important.

1046 Before I get into my questions, I just would like to touch on the funding announcement on
1047 Monday from the Department of Energy, which Dr. Wagner mentioned in his written testimony.

1048 This announcement includes an award of \$900 million with Centrus Energy to expand uranium
1049 enrichment in Piketon, Ohio, which is actually in Congressman Dave Taylor's district. I am a little
1050 north of there up in central Ohio.

1051 So I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank our National Labs and the Department of
1052 Energy and say that I am very excited for Ohio's role as a continued leader in nuclear energy
1053 innovation and securing our domestic nuclear energy supply.

1054 So thank you for mentioning that, Dr. Wagner.

1055 My first question is for Mr. Williams.

1056 Mr. Williams, thank you for being here.

1057 To understand the challenges for building nuclear reactors, it is important we hear from
1058 somebody who built them.

1059 Mr. Williams, I will direct my first question to you. Your testimony details some of the
1060 lessons learned with Plant Vogtle and the significant efficiencies gained on Unit 4 once Unit 3 was
1061 completed. Can you explain some of these lessons learned in more detail and how Southern
1062 Company plans to supports other companies that are interested in pursuing nuclear development?

1063 Mr. Williams. Thank you for your question, Congressman.

1064 I think I will start by saying, you know, we did see -- we had a robust lessons-learned program
1065 at the project during construction, making sure that, as we learned things as we did them the first

1066 time on Unit 3, that changes were made and implemented on Unit 4. That is how we saw the
1067 20-percent reduction in cost. That is how we saw the reduction in there.

1068 The big areas where we saw much of the improvement was around electrical installation.
1069 And I think it is -- you know, you just think about it from, if you are building something the first time
1070 and you are going to do it a second time -- maybe you are putting together shelves from Ikea or
1071 something like that -- that second time is going to be a lot faster than the first time. And that is
1072 exactly what we saw at Vogtle and really, definitely in the area of electrical installation, where we
1073 laser-mapped the rooms and essentially replicated those installations on Unit 4. That was how we
1074 did that.

1075 We have all of that information, and we are sharing that with anyone who wants to build new
1076 nuclear, both in the United States and abroad, to make sure that they get all the lessons that we
1077 learned so that they can have a leg up in terms of their construction.

1078 Mr. Balderson. Thank you.

1079 A followup: Ohio's 12th Congressional District, which is what I represent, includes a
1080 significant number of data centers. There are over 130 data centers already operating in central
1081 Ohio, with many more looking to be constructed in the coming months and years.

1082 Nuclear energy is an important baseload energy source that will be critical to helping power
1083 new demand from these facilities and ensuring reliability for our constituencies. That said, building
1084 new nuclear involves very high capital cost, which may rise affordability concerns.

1085 What are utilities like the Southern Company doing to protect affordability?

1086 Mr. Williams. So affordability is our North Star at Southern Company. As I mentioned in
1087 our discussions, we are focused on -- we have frozen rates in Georgia and Alabama. We are trying
1088 to keep rates as low as possible. And that is part of the reason why we have laid out some of the
1089 solutions today in our testimony about things that can help to bring down those barriers to new
1090 project construction.

1091 We are absolutely focused on making sure that we can work with -- within our market
1092 structure, we work with our customers, we work with public-private partnerships, which was critical
1093 to the Vogtle build, that all of those things come together to make sure that we can put forth a
1094 solution for building new nuclear that is absolutely affordable for our customers. That is going to
1095 be critical.

1096 Mr. Balderson. Okay.

1097 I am going to follow up a little bit just from the standpoint of -- I talked about our
1098 constituencies. These new nuclear facilities, how will they work out in the long run for our
1099 ratepayers?

1100 Mr. Williams. So there are a lot of benefits of nuclear generation to our ratepayers.

1101 First and foremost, they are 24/7. They are baseload generation and capacity for our
1102 customers. They provide fuel stability. And they have low operating cost. So, in our market,
1103 when our nuclear units are running, our customers are paying less for the electricity that they receive
1104 than they otherwise would.

1105 Those benefits absolutely, over the 60- to 80-year life of that plant, provide significant benefit
1106 to our customers.

1107 Mr. Balderson. Okay. Thank you.

1108 And, Mr. Chairman, I will submit the rest of my questions. I yield back. Thank you.

1109 [The information follows:]

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1112

1113 Mr. Latta. Thank you.

1114 The gentleman yields back the balance of his time.

1115 The chair now recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey's Eighth District for 5 minutes for
1116 questions.

1117 Mr. Menendez. Thank you, Chairman.

1118 Over the past year, we have watched President Trump continually attack our Federal agencies
1119 and their staff, actively hamstringing their ability to carry out their critical missions in service to our
1120 country. And all the while, House Republicans have sat by idly and let it happen.

1121 On this committee, we have heard House Republicans loudly proclaim the need for more
1122 energy to keep up with demand from AI data centers and to compete with foreign adversaries.
1123 Some argue for an all-of-the-above energy strategy -- but only when it is convenient for them.
1124 Suddenly, when the conversation turns to connecting clean, renewable energy to the grid and
1125 actually addressing the need for more energy, they don't want an all-of-the-above strategy anymore.

1126 I think everyone on this committee can agree that nuclear energy poses significant safety risk
1127 and environmental concerns for the American people that we must address. Regardless of your
1128 stance on nuclear, this is just a plain and simple fact.

1129 Ms. Greenwald, just "yes" or "no," isn't the role of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to
1130 ensure that nuclear reactors can operate safely?

1131 Ms. Greenwald. Yes.

1132 Mr. Menendez. So, in other words, the NRC keeps our communities safe. Is that correct?

1133 Ms. Greenwald. Yes, although -- I know you would like a "yes" or "no," but it is also in
1134 partnership with the industry. The industry has a huge role in ensuring safety.

1135 Mr. Menendez. And I appreciate that. Thank you.

1136 And can you briefly touch on how NRC's independence helps to achieve that goal?

1137 Ms. Greenwald. Thanks for the question.

1138 As I said in my testimony, we really do think that having the public trust is really important.

1139 That provides the industry with social license to operate, and it is good for our country. We really

1140 need this technology, and we need for the public to feel that it is appropriately overseen by a

1141 competent regulator.

1142 Mr. Menendez. And an independent regulator.

1143 Ms. Greenwald. Yes. And the independence has been a longstanding tool to achieve that

1144 public trust, because the public now has confidence that the NRC is making their decisions

1145 independently. They are making their best technical judgment.

1146 It is a highly technical staff. They are very careful to make sure that industry is making a

1147 good safety case for their technologies and that they are doing what they are supposed to do, and

1148 that is through licensing, inspection, and oversight.

1149 Mr. Menendez. Perfect. I want to continue off of that.

1150 But, unfortunately, we have seen this administration blatantly go after NRC's independence,

1151 which jeopardizes the safety of nuclear energy.

1152 Since taking office, President Trump illegally fired NRC Commissioner Hanson years before his

1153 term ended and has made other Commissioners feel as though they could be fired at any moment if

1154 they go against the administration; set expectations that NRC would rubber-stamp reactor designs

1155 given to them by the administration; issued several executive orders targeting NRC; installed DOGE

1156 staff at NRC to bypass Commissioners; and pushed out senior staff who are critical for NRC

1157 operations. That is in addition to cuts to Department of Energy staff who are responsible for

1158 nuclear energy programs.

1159 None of this helps ensure that the deployment of nuclear technology is safe for the American

1160 people, nor does it help the nuclear energy in any way, to your point. All it does is set us back on

1161 meeting our energy goals.

1162 Ms. Greenwald, I know you mentioned this in your testimony, but I want our committee
1163 members to hear it again. You made clear earlier that NRC independence is essential to safety.
1164 Just "yes" or "no," does bipartisan policy help us meet our energy goals?

1165 Ms. Greenwald. Absolutely.

1166 Mr. Menendez. Thank you. And what about adequate staffing levels at NRC and DOE?

1167 Ms. Greenwald. Absolutely. Super-important.

1168 Mr. Menendez. That is the exact opposite of what this administration and House
1169 Republicans are doing. We aren't having good-faith, bipartisan discussions in this committee,
1170 because that requires our colleagues across the aisle to speak out when this administration is
1171 undermining the things that we know are helpful for our nuclear energy policy. They have sat here
1172 and done nothing about the President's firing of Federal staff or any of the attacks on NRC's
1173 independence.

1174 So, again, if we need an all-of-the-above strategy, why are House Republicans allowing this
1175 administration to hamstring an agency that can help us achieve energy dominance through an
1176 all-of-the-above strategy?

1177 And it isn't just energy policy that House Republicans refuse to hold the President
1178 accountable for; it is on everything from healthcare, which we saw here during reconciliation and the
1179 immense cuts to Medicaid, to AI, to the rising affordability crisis, which the President has deemed a
1180 "Democratic hoax." And this is after the President gave himself an A-plus-plus-plus-plus on his
1181 handling of the economy.

1182 When you talk to our constituents, we know that they are struggling. We know that energy
1183 prices are a part of that problem. But our colleagues refuse to hold the President accountable.

1184 So how can we expect to have a meaningful, bipartisan discussion on critical safety issues
1185 while House Republicans completely ignore the harmful actions of this President? There is a
1186 complete lack of accountability on this committee and the House at large, and it is hurting the

1187 American people. And it will continue to hurt the American people with the reckless erosion of the
1188 independence of agencies such as the NRC. It is a shame.

1189 With that, I yield back.

1190 Mr. Latta. Thank you very much.

1191 The gentleman yields back the balance of his time.

1192 The chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Iowa's First -- or, I am sorry --

1193 Mrs. Harshbarger. Yeah.

1194 Mr. Latta. -- from Tennessee's --

1195 Mrs. Harshbarger. Wrong State.

1196 Mr. Latta. -- First District for 5 minutes for questions.

1197 Mrs. Harshbarger. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1198 Thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

1199 As you know, Tennessee has an incredible history dating back to the Manhattan Project, and
1200 we are proud to keep that tradition alive. In my district in east Tennessee, we produce a nuclear
1201 fuel for the Navy and support other NNSA critical mission areas. And, last year, the Department
1202 awarded a major contract in my district for the production of high-purity depleted uranium, which is
1203 an important national security initiative.

1204 And, as I understand it, the depleted uranium is 40-percent less radioactive than natural
1205 uranium and that the resulting waste for this contract will be solidified and transported offsite. And
1206 I want to make sure that this is safe for the community where it is going to be transported to.

1207 So my question is for Ms. Korsnick.

1208 For my constituents, can you describe what the industry's safety standards are for handling
1209 nuclear materials and how they relate to actual radiation risk?

1210 Ms. Korsnick. Absolutely. I guess I can share just maybe broadly with my many years of
1211 experience in the industry, where we have handled nuclear fuel of all different types.

1212 Mrs. Harshbarger. Uh-huh.

1213 Ms. Korsnick. Fuel is always managed with a high level of reverence.

1214 Mrs. Harshbarger. Yes.

1215 Ms. Korsnick. And so I can share with you that the processes that will be used are not only
1216 really carefully followed by the company that is doing them but has a strong degree of oversight as
1217 well.

1218 And the NRC manages oversight for fuel facilities as well, just like they do power plants. And
1219 there are strict rules and regulations that are around that, and not only at the facility but for the
1220 transportation of that, to ensure that it is all done very safely and with sufficient shielding that it will
1221 not have effect on the local community.

1222 Mrs. Harshbarger. You know, you just want to make your residents feel safe, so --

1223 Ms. Korsnick. Absolutely.

1224 Mrs. Harshbarger. -- I appreciate that.

1225 Under the leadership of President Trump and Secretary Wright, we are seeing how the
1226 Federal Government can propel our domestic supply chain forward instead of hindering innovation.

1227 And, Dr. Wagner, you said this earlier. You mentioned the Department of Energy
1228 announced \$2.7 billion to strengthen the domestic enrichment services of low-enriched uranium and
1229 high-assay low-enriched uranium. That means we are not only going to build those nuclear plants
1230 but we are going to fuel, and it will be American too.

1231 So my question -- and I can ask you this, Dr. Wagner -- how does this shift to a fully domestic
1232 fuel supply chain for U.S. national security and energy independence?

1233 Dr. Wagner. So, in a lot of ways -- and thank you for the question, by the way, and the
1234 proud history of Tennessee relative to nuclear energy and nuclear security.

1235 And I would start by saying that almost all of our uranium that is used in our commercial
1236 power reactors is coming from overseas, some from allied nations and some from not. On the

1237 order of 20 to 25 percent of our material has been coming from Russia. That puts a dependency on
1238 an unallied nation, I will just say.

1239 Mrs. Harshbarger. Yeah.

1240 Dr. Wagner. And critical to not only our current operations of our reactors but certainly any
1241 expansion and future growth.

1242 And so this investment in domestic enrichment capability that we basically let atrophy over
1243 several decades as we relied on foreign countries -- fixing that is going to take some time and some
1244 money. And so this is a huge, huge step forward to ensuring our domestic fuel supply. So I am
1245 really pleased to see those announcements this week.

1246 Mrs. Harshbarger. Me too.

1247 Do you forecast any challenges we might have to navigate to ensure that these Federal
1248 investments in HALEU deconversion and enrichment services interact effectively with private-sector
1249 planning as we advance reactors and we move from the demonstration to the deployments? Like,
1250 you know, there are overlapping timelines there.

1251 Dr. Wagner. I would say there are a couple points here.

1252 One is, as you probably are well aware, there is a bit of a time mismatch, particularly on the
1253 production of high-assay low-enriched uranium. Right now in the U.S., there is only one company
1254 that is able to do that and it is at a very small scale, and so that needs to scale up.

1255 Meanwhile, we have an active advanced reactor deployment set of companies that need that
1256 material now. And so one of the challenges the Department has is how to fill those near-term
1257 needs in this time mismatch, if you will. And, again, that is why it is so important that the awards
1258 were done this week.

1259 The other aspects of it is more just normal commercial infrastructure -- construction, jobs,
1260 supply chain, and so forth -- that they will have to work through.

1261 Mrs. Harshbarger. Yeah. It just takes time. It just takes time to rebuild what has been

1262 degraded.

1263 So, with that, Mr. Chairman, my time is almost up, and I will submit questions for the record.

1264

1265 [The information follows:]

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1268

1269 Mr. Latta. Well, thank you very much.

1270 The gentlelady yields back.

1271 And the chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Virginia's Fourth District for 5 minutes for
1272 questions.

1273 Ms. McClellan. Thank you, Chairman Latta and Ranking Member Castor, for holding this
1274 very important hearing.

1275 And thank you to our witnesses.

1276 Safe and well-regulated nuclear energy has to be a key part of any energy strategy that seeks
1277 to increase capacity and affordability to meet our growing energy needs. I think all of the witnesses
1278 have spoken to that. And this hearing takes an important step in shaping that strategy.

1279 However, we can't ignore the context in which this hearing is taking place. While the
1280 chairman and the Republicans on this committee have said they support an all-of-the-above energy
1281 policy to generate enough energy to meet all of our demands, they have sat idly by while the Trump
1282 administration undermines the Department of Energy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and
1283 eviscerates their staffs; ensnares our Nation in regime change in Venezuela at taxpayer expense in an
1284 effort to exploit that country's heavy crude oil reserves; and canceled or paused dozens of major
1285 clean-energy projects that would have dramatically increased our energy production capacity,
1286 including the Virginia Coastal Offshore Wind Project, paused over the break, which was estimated to
1287 be completed later this year and generate up to 2.6 gigawatts of power when fully operational to
1288 support the fastest-growing part of America's energy grid, producing 9.5 million megawatt hours
1289 annually or enough to power over 900 Virginia homes. At a time when this committee talks about
1290 the importance of permitting reform, this pause has left a major electric supplier in Virginia
1291 wondering if they can even rely on the permits once they get them.

1292 So you can understand why I am a little skeptical that under the current administration we

1293 can be truly prepared to make safe nuclear energy a serious part of our energy strategy. But I am
1294 hopeful that we can do so.

1295 So, Ms. Greenwald, you established for the ranking member the importance of the NRC's
1296 independence. How could efforts to undermine the NRC's independence negatively impact the
1297 nuclear energy industry and our ability to quickly roll out new technology in the nuclear space and
1298 keep up with nuclear plants being deployed by our rivals?

1299 Ms. Greenwald. Thank you for the question, Congresswoman. I do think I have said this
1300 already, but happy to say it again.

1301 We do think that the independence is very important. A really important thing, from our
1302 perspective, is to make sure that we have public trust in nuclear deployment. And we really think
1303 that having a competent NRC that is well-staffed, that is independent in a number of ways -- as you
1304 may recall from my testimony, there are a number of aspects of independence that we need to think
1305 about. And it is very important that the NRC is transparent, competent, well-staffed, and does its
1306 job well. That is in all of our interests.

1307 Ms. McClellan. And on transparency, you have mentioned that changes to the NRC's
1308 rulemaking process decrease transparency and raise serious concerns about stakeholder ability to
1309 engage in the rulemaking process.

1310 And I can tell you, we have seen firsthand on a number of energy projects that the minute
1311 that you lose public trust in the transparency of the process, that project is going to be opposed,
1312 whether it is a good idea or not.

1313 And so can you elaborate on your concerns about this decrease in transparency?

1314 Ms. Greenwald. Yeah. There are a couple of issues.

1315 The specific issue is that there is a new executive order, separate from the executive orders
1316 that focus on accelerating deployment of new nuclear energy and U.S. leadership in nuclear energy.
1317 And that applies to all agencies that were formerly considered independent; at least some

1318 still -- hopefully still independent. It depends on how the courts deal with this.

1319 But, basically, all of those agencies are newly under a process whereby their rulemakings are
1320 reviewed by the White House Office of Management and Budget, and they have an office called
1321 OIRA, which is the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.

1322 And that process introduces several rulemaking steps that mean that the public and the
1323 stakeholders won't see certain processes that normally in the past we have seen as the rules go
1324 through the NRC. So we won't see things that get to the Commission, and we won't see various
1325 steps.

1326 We think that it would be much better if we maintained transparency. There may be other
1327 ways to do this, but we think it is very important that stakeholders, industry, folks like us who have
1328 an interest in the success of the nuclear sector have an opportunity to weigh in. We think that
1329 makes the rules better. We think that having good stakeholder engagement, effective, timely -- we
1330 are all, I think, willing to quickly review things, but we definitely have to have sufficient time.

1331 So I think that is the concern. And we think it is actually solvable with creative solutions and
1332 making sure we actually pay attention to the importance of this.

1333 Ms. McClellan. Thank you.

1334 And I yield back.

1335 Mr. Latta. Thank you very much.

1336 The gentlelady's time has expired, and she yields back.

1337 The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Georgia's 12th District for 5 minutes for
1338 questions.

1339 Mr. Allen. Thank you, Chair Latta, for holding this important hearing on the future of
1340 nuclear energy.

1341 I want to thank the witnesses for being here to testify.

1342 John, it is great to see you, as always, and our great partner, Southern Company, in the State

1343 of Georgia.

1344 Nuclear energy has a pivotal role to play in reclaiming American energy dominance. You
1345 know, I think there should be no question about that.

1346 As the largest clean-energy site in the United States, Plant Vogtle in Georgia's 12th District is
1347 leading the way in our Nation's nuclear future, where Units 3 and 4, the first two nuclear energy units
1348 to be built in the United States in over three decades, are fully operational and providing a stable
1349 baseload supply of electricity to Georgia homes and businesses.

1350 And, again, I want to shout out to Southern Company and Georgia Power for -- it was tough,
1351 but we got it done, and, boy, those things are humming.

1352 Also, getting in the gas business was -- I have been to the gas facilities as well, generating
1353 facilities, down in Effingham County. And so it is an all-of-the-above approach. And I just thank
1354 you for your foresight and your company and what they have done for our State.

1355 Mr. -- I have to be formal here -- Mr. Williams, as you know, I am a proud supporter of Plant
1356 Vogtle, what it means to Georgia. Georgia has been ranked the best State to do business in for over
1357 a decade, and the State of Georgia is delivering on this administration's top priorities of energy
1358 dominance and affordability. We are providing abundant energy to serve data centers. We are in
1359 a race for AI, a critical race. And -- while also protecting the pocketbooks of everyday Americans.
1360 We have the lowest -- some of the lowest rates in the country.

1361 I think that our State's energy market structure has a lot to do with that success, and it has
1362 helped us avoid many of the issues that other parts of the country are experiencing, like New England
1363 and California, where you cannot get a natural gas pipeline built, or the PJM region, where prices are
1364 skyrocketing and there is not enough power to cover the reliability requirements.

1365 With all that in mind, how did Georgia's energy market structure enable it to build Plant
1366 Vogtle, get in the gas business? And why is the energy market structure important to new nuclear
1367 development?

1368 Mr. Williams. Thank you for the question, Congressman. And we have appreciated your
1369 support of our Vogtle project during these many years of construction.

1370 As you know, our market structure was critical in bringing the Vogtle units on line for the
1371 benefit of our customers. Our vertically integrated, State-regulated structure is why the Southeast
1372 remains open for business while many others around the country have had to close.

1373 Nuclear generation is more capital-intensive up front, and it requires long construction times.
1374 And it is that holistic planning process that is brought about by that vertically integrated,
1375 State-regulated process that allows us to look into the future in a transparent way with our
1376 customers and all the stakeholders in the State and choose the best energy options for our
1377 customers over the next 20-plus years.

1378 Financing for these projects is challenging. That vertically integrated structure provides us
1379 the necessary markets that we need. We are not relying on short-term market signals; we are
1380 relying on, how are we going to serve our customers for the long term?

1381 So, quite simply, our market structure was critical.

1382 Mr. Allen. Right. And, of course, you know, you talked about the capital requirements for
1383 these plans, but when they are running, it is the most efficient way to produce electricity by far,
1384 right?

1385 Mr. Williams. That is correct.

1386 Mr. Allen. Can you explain the difference between the AP1000 technology and other
1387 technologies that we hear about like the SMRs?

1388 Mr. Williams. Yes. Thanks for that question as well.

1389 There are tons of nuclear technologies out in the market today, and we are in favor of all of
1390 them.

1391 Obviously, our AP1000 is the most advanced nuclear power plant operating in the world, with
1392 passive safety features. So we are not relying on motors and pumps; we are relying on gravity and

1393 natural circulation. We are not relying on offsite power; we are relying on batteries. And our
1394 operators don't have to take action for 72 hours in the event of an upset at our facility. That is the
1395 AP1000.

1396 These other technologies offer similar safety features and provide those, but when we look
1397 at -- and in my testimony I said, "Design once, build many." We have built this. It is licensed. It
1398 is working. We know how to do it. We need to, for the sake of getting to nth-of-a-kind and
1399 rebuilding the infrastructure in the United States, focus on a technology that can deliver safe, reliable
1400 energy to our customers.

1401 Mr. Allen. Yeah.

1402 Ms. Korsnick, I am out of time, but, obviously, we are in a race in AI with China. China is
1403 building as many as 10 or more of these power plants. And I would like for you to submit for the
1404 record your comments regarding this race and what we need to do to catch up.

1405 [The information follows:]

1406

1407 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1408

1409 Mr. Allen. And then, with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

1410 Mr. Latta. Thank you very much.

1411 The gentleman's time has expired, and he yields back.

1412 And the chair now recognizes the gentlelady from California's Seventh District for 5 minutes
1413 for questions.

1414 Ms. Matsui. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for having this hearing today.

1415 And I want to thank the witnesses for being here also.

1416 I want to be clear, I support nuclear power as an important clean-energy source. But safety
1417 must always come first, and nuclear waste is not something that we can brush under the rug and
1418 ignore. We can't build new nuclear power plants without a plan to deal with the waste they
1419 produce.

1420 The Rancho Seco Nuclear Power Plant in my district was shut down over 30 years ago, but the
1421 spent fuel is still there because Congress and the Federal Government have failed to implement a
1422 successful nuclear waste program. This is not a technical problem; this is a policy failure. And it is
1423 our responsibility on this committee to fix it.

1424 I know many members of this committee are hopeful that new recycling technologies will
1425 solve the waste problem. But even in an ideal scenario, recycling won't fully eliminate nuclear
1426 waste.

1427 Ms. Greenwald, does the Nuclear Innovation Alliance support recycling?

1428 Ms. Greenwald. Yes, we support spent nuclear fuel recycling, provided it is done with
1429 appropriate safeguards and nonproliferation --

1430 Ms. Matsui. Okay.

1431 Ms. Greenwald. -- measures (ph) in place.

1432 Ms. Matsui. Now, under an ideal scenario, how much waste could be recycled?

1433 Ms. Greenwald. So recycling can significantly reduce the total volume that requires
1434 permanent disposal. Currently in France, they are reducing the total volume of spent nuclear fuel
1435 by up to 80 percent.

1436 Ms. Matsui. Okay.

1437 Ms. Greenwald. However, recycling can never eliminate --

1438 Ms. Matsui. Sure.

1439 Ms. Greenwald. -- the need for a permanent repository, because you can't recycle
1440 100 percent.

1441 Ms. Matsui. Okay. Okay. So we are unlikely to actually achieve the ideal scenario there.

1442 Ms. Greenwald. But significant -- make a significant dent.

1443 Ms. Matsui. Okay. So you still believe in the need for a comprehensive Federal waste
1444 program?

1445 Ms. Greenwald. I am sorry?

1446 Ms. Matsui. Okay.

1447 Ms. Korsnick, do you agree that an effective comprehensive nuclear waste disposal program
1448 is essential to the long-term future of the nuclear industry?

1449 Ms. Korsnick. Yes. We submitted a letter to the Secretary of Energy in October of this year
1450 that outlined a comprehensive used-fuel strategy.

1451 Ms. Matsui. Yeah. So it is fair to say that the current nuclear waste framework stipulated
1452 by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act does not meet that need at this moment in time.

1453 Ms. Korsnick, "yes" or "no," please: Do you agree with that statement that I just made?

1454 Ms. Korsnick. That is correct. We need changes to make a durable, long-term --

1455 Ms. Matsui. Okay.

1456 Ms. Korsnick. -- waste integrated strategy.

1457 Ms. Matsui. Dr. Wagner and Ms. Greenwald, "yes" or "no," please: Do you agree that this

1458 committee should update the Nuclear Waste Policy Act to modernize our nuclear waste framework?

1459 Dr. Wagner. Yes.

1460 Ms. Greenwald. Yes.

1461 Ms. Matsui. Okay.

1462 I think it is clear from the enduring impasse over at Yucca Mountain that a consent-based or
1463 collaborative siting process is essential for any Federal storage framework going forward.

1464 Ms. Korsnick, do you agree with the need for consent-based siting?

1465 Ms. Korsnick. Yes, we do.

1466 Ms. Matsui. Ms. Greenwald, how can consent-based siting help us move beyond Yucca
1467 Mountain?

1468 Ms. Greenwald. Thanks for the question. This is really important.

1469 So, as a country, we spent several decades trying to put a permanent repository somewhere
1470 where people didn't want it, and that has not turned out well. So we really think that
1471 consent-based siting is the way to go.

1472 And a number of other countries are moving on that, particularly Sweden. Finland is
1473 especially the furthest along, and Canada is embarking on this as well.

1474 Ms. Matsui. Okay.

1475 Ms. Greenwald. So we think it is the way to go.

1476 Ms. Matsui. All right. Thank you.

1477 Dr. Wagner and Ms. Korsnick, you also both included the need for interim storage in your
1478 testimony. I have long been a proponent of consolidated interim storage.

1479 So I want to quickly recap for members of the committee.

1480 Ms. Korsnick, Dr. Wagner, and Ms. Greenwald, there seems to be broad agreement that this
1481 committee should amend the Nuclear Waste Policy Act to modernize our nuclear waste framework
1482 to incorporate consent-based siting and authorize interim storage facilities. I look forward to

1483 continuing this conversation and working with my colleagues to develop an effective nuclear waste
1484 framework.

1485 Let me just go on with it. I know I am running out of time here.

1486 I know that many of colleagues believe fixing our nuclear waste system is not an urgent
1487 problem. But it is a costly problem, and the cost goes up every year that we kick the can down the
1488 road. So far, this has cost the government \$12 billion, and that goes up by around \$1 billion every
1489 year. So, if my colleagues really want to save taxpayers money, fixing our Federal nuclear waste
1490 program can save billions of dollars.

1491 And I see I am running out of time, so I yield back the rest of my time. Thank you, Mr.
1492 Chairman.

1493 Mr. Latta. Thank you very much.

1494 The gentlelady yields back the balance of her time.

1495 And the chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Iowa's First District for 5 minutes for
1496 questions.

1497 Mrs. Miller-Meeks. Thank you, Chair Latta and Ranking Member Castor, for holding this
1498 hearing on the current state of nuclear energy.

1499 As a young girl, my father was a nuclear physicist technician in the Air Force and was one of
1500 the people who shut down the nuclear power plants in, if I recall correctly, Fort Belvoir, Virginia;
1501 Sundance, Wyoming; and then was at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

1502 So, to be where we are today when just 5 years ago, as a State senator meeting with
1503 environmental groups, when asking about energy and the need for energy, were told "No nuclear,"
1504 we indeed at a pivotal moment for American nuclear energy. After decades of stagnation, market
1505 forces, national security imperatives, bipartisan policy are finally aligned. The question before us no
1506 longer is whether America needs nuclear energy but how quickly we can deploy it.

1507 Iowa understands energy leadership. Our any-of-the-above strategy has made Iowa a top

1508 10 State for affordable electricity rates.

1509 Governor Reynolds recently signed an executive order establishing the Iowa Nuclear Energy
1510 Task Force. The task force will work to align State policies with Federal regulations, engage with
1511 manufacturers to cultivate a nuclear supply chain in Iowa, and identify opportunities to enhance
1512 economic growth through nuclear energy.

1513 A key focus will be supporting the restart of Duane Arnold Energy Center and ensuring Iowa is
1514 positioned to attract future nuclear development. NextEra Energy is working to bring Duane Arnold
1515 back on line by late 2028 or 2029.

1516 And part of the reversal in nuclear plant closures and the reopening of Duane Arnold is the
1517 ADVANCE Act, which this committee championed. It is critical to making these restarts possible by
1518 streamlining licensing, reducing regulatory duplication, and creating more predictable timelines for
1519 project approvals.

1520 But Iowa's story is America's story, and while our nuclear industry stagnated, as has been
1521 pointed out, China and Russia surged ahead, now accounting for 94 percent of reactors under
1522 construction worldwide.

1523 That competition isn't just about electricity; it is about American jobs, domestic
1524 manufacturing, exporting knowledge and equipment, and secure supply chains. We have watched
1525 critical skills atrophy and lost a generation of nuclear expertise. Rebuilding our nuclear energy
1526 industry means rebuilding the workforce, supply chains, and the industrial base that comes with it.

1527 Dr. Wagner, you mentioned the National Laboratories have maintained nuclear expertise,
1528 even during decades of stagnation. And let me point out that the Ames National Lab in Iowa was
1529 actually instrumental in World War II by developing a process for high-purified uranium and supplied
1530 uranium to Chicago. I think it was about 2 million pounds. So we know the National Laboratories
1531 play an important role.

1532 What role can INL and the broader Lab system play in preserving and transferring knowledge

1533 to the next generation of commercial projects and helping with the workforce issues?

1534 Dr. Wagner. So thank you for that question and the rich history there in Iowa. And,
1535 actually, thank you for your remarks. I couldn't agree more with the remarks that you made,
1536 particularly about the global implications.

1537 So we actually have maintained capability but not at the level that we need it to be. And so
1538 one of the things that we have been doing, and assisted greatly from congressional actions and
1539 appropriations, is reestablishing our capability to do these things again. While we had core nuclear
1540 expertise over these time periods, there was a period, particularly from 1994 to 2005, when there
1541 was no focus in the National Laboratories on new nuclear energy. And so, of course, that has
1542 changed, and I am very, very thankful for that.

1543 But some of the key projects that I talked about already -- the MARVEL microreactor, some of
1544 these other microreactors -- are reestablishing our capabilities at the Laboratory in terms of expertise
1545 but also, with the Department of Energy, the capability and the capacity to do the safety reviews and
1546 authorizations and all this and exercise that NEPA in the modern era. All these different things are
1547 being exercised right now that will not only prepare, you know, and help the commercial side; it will
1548 develop that workforce and supply chain that we so desperately need.

1549 Mrs. Miller-Meeks. Yeah.

1550 And speaking of workforce, there is a plethora of questions that I have, but I just wanted to
1551 recognize the life and career of professor Nuno Loureiro, director of MIT's Plasma Science and Fusion
1552 Center, who was senselessly murdered in December, which, again, takes away in fusion energy part
1553 of that development and mentoring of young individuals.

1554 If I could -- Mr. Williams, you mentioned about financial support. I am just going to submit
1555 this for the record to be answered because I am running out of time, but two questions:

1556 Can you explain why this type of support would not end up paying for mistakes that a
1557 company like Southern Company or any other company responsible for building a plant might make

1558 by having financial support? And how long would Congress and the Federal Government need to
1559 financially support this industry, and what does it mean for nuclear development going forward?

1560

1561 [The information follows:]

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1563 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1564

1565 Mrs. Miller-Meeks. I think those are very important to us getting up to the speed of other
1566 nations for more data centers and AI on line.

1567 And, with that, I yield back.

1568 Mr. Latta. The gentlelady's time has expired, and she yields back.

1569 And the chair now recognizes the gentleman from New York's 20th District for 5 minutes for
1570 questions.

1571 Mr. Tonko. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1572 First, I associate myself with the comments highlighting the importance of a strong,
1573 independent nuclear safety regulator. This is not only critical for the health and safety of our
1574 constituents but, indeed, for the nuclear industry as well.

1575 The public support and social license to operate needed for a new nuclear renaissance could
1576 end with just a single incident. If the nuclear industry and congressional Republicans are serious
1577 about bringing this vision to fruition, then we do need to come together to support a fully
1578 independent NRC.

1579 It sounds like there is some consensus from the witnesses that standardization of project
1580 design reduces costs and that there needs to be continued Federal support to reach nth-of-a-kind
1581 projects.

1582 Most of the countries that have continued to build reactors steadily since the 1970s have
1583 done so by using a settled reactor design. But at the moment in the United States, there are a lot of
1584 different technologies being pursued, many of which are receiving Federal research and
1585 demonstration funding.

1586 So I would like to ask our witnesses to imagine that we achieve President Trump's goal of
1587 growing from 100 gigawatts of U.S. nuclear capacity today to that 400 level of gigawatts by 2050.
1588 Right now, there are numerous companies working to deploy new reactor designs.

1589 So, to the witnesses: In this future, how many companies do we believe will ultimately be
1590 successful in commercializing their product? And will there be a single large-scale reactor design
1591 and a single SMR design, or will there, in your opinion, be many competing options?

1592 Anyone that would like to respond to that, please?

1593 Ms. Korsnick. I am happy to start --

1594 Mr. Tonko. Thank you.

1595 Ms. Korsnick. -- Congressman.

1596 I would say, just like any technology -- imagine that we weren't talking about nuclear -- when
1597 there is so much innovation going on, you are going to see several different companies. That is
1598 what we are seeing now in nuclear. And I think ultimately you are going to see some of these, I will
1599 also say, combine and collect, so you are going to see some narrowing in the industry. But I don't,
1600 however, think that you are going to get to only one SMR design or only one, let's say, microreactor
1601 design.

1602 And the reason is, the different technologies that you have been talking about here on this
1603 panel offer different attributes, right? So some designs offer very-high-temperature steam, and
1604 that might be something you are interested in. Some designs might not offer as much
1605 high-temperature steam, but they might offer you more efficient electricity.

1606 So it depends, really, on what you are trying to use. For nuclear, you could get the steam;
1607 you could get the electricity; you can use some of that to create hydrogen. And there is going to be
1608 a lot of different opportunities in the marketplace.

1609 And so I think you are going to see that the designs are looked at not only for how quickly can
1610 you build and then how efficiently can they operate but what product are they producing that you, as
1611 a company, you know, are looking for.

1612 Mr. Tonko. Okay.

1613 So, within that vein, when it comes to the Federal Government's strategy to achieve this

1614 vision, if we are going to deploy a lot of new reactors in the next two decades, should the
1615 government bet on more companies by spreading our limited Federal assistance broadly or provide
1616 greater assistance to a fewer number of the most promising technologies?

1617 Anyone?

1618 Ms. Greenwald?

1619 Ms. Greenwald. Yeah. So we actually like the diversity of programs that the Department
1620 of Energy has now, including the addition of the couple of programs that just happened this year.

1621 So we have a range of programs. We have an Advanced Reactor Demonstration Program
1622 that is demonstrating, to non-light-water reactors that are SMRs. There is now also a Gen III-Plus
1623 program that is demonstrating a couple of designs of light-water SMRs. There is this pilot program
1624 which is a lot of shots on goal with a very -- for very-small-size reactors. And there is also a
1625 number -- there is a bunch of fuels programs. There is the loan program.

1626 We have this, in my view, correct diversity of programs where we are trying -- we can't bet on
1627 everything, but we can make a number of bets.

1628 And then, as Maria was saying, there is going to ultimately have to be a down-select. Not
1629 everyone is going to make it. And that is actually okay. That has happened in the past with other
1630 types of technologies outside the nuclear sector as well as in the nuclear sector.

1631 I think what is one of our key strengths as a country is this sort of entrepreneurial spirit that
1632 allows a lot of these different types of companies to try things. Not all of them are going to win, but
1633 having that entrepreneurial energy that we are getting right now and having all these
1634 different companies trying things is good.

1635 But, ultimately, we can't -- all of those designs won't all work out. So we are going to have
1636 to get to standardize. But in our country, as opposed to some other places where it is more
1637 state-controlled, there is going to be this interaction between the government decisions, what they
1638 are interested in providing incentives for, what the regulator approves, as well as the market.

1639 Because, as Maria said, there are a lot of different use cases for these different technologies, so
1640 probably in each use case there might be more than one technology but there probably won't be so
1641 many designs or so many successes.

1642 Mr. Tonko. Okay. I appreciate that.

1643 And I see I am down to the zero moment, so thank you, Mr. Chair, and I yield back.

1644 Mr. Latta. Thank you.

1645 The gentleman's time has expired, and he yields back.

1646 The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Alabama's Sixth District for 5 minutes for
1647 questions.

1648 Mr. Palmer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1649 And I know a couple times people have mentioned our friend Doug LaMalfa. And I just want
1650 to say, I am praying for his family and he was a great friend.

1651 Mr. Williams, you know I am very interested in small modular reactors, and I just want to
1652 know where Southern Company is on that. As I understand it, you may have been involved with a
1653 private entity in the development of SMRs? Is that -- is Southern Company investing in that area?

1654 Mr. Williams. So thank you for the question, Congressman.

1655 You know, our focus, obviously, has been on the completion of Vogtle Units 3 and 4 and
1656 getting those units into service for the benefit of our customers.

1657 As we look at the landscape of all the technologies that are out there in front of us, obviously,
1658 we are interested in all of the technologies that are available.

1659 You mentioned our partnership that we have had over many years now working with
1660 TerraPower and the DOE on the Molten Chloride Fast Reactor, which is a Gen IV reactor that we have
1661 spent a great deal of time and effort to try to bring that -- you know, there is integrated effects
1662 testing now occurring at the Idaho National Lab associated with that. And we continue to focus on
1663 that.

1664 The other areas that we focus on specifically around SMRs is, how can we share the lessons
1665 that we learned at Plant Vogtle, with our construction, to those? Not all of those lessons are
1666 specific to AP1000s and are absolutely transferable to other technologies --

1667 Mr. Palmer. Thank you.

1668 Mr. Williams. -- and so how can we help them be successful.

1669 Mr. Palmer. I have asked this question before, in regard to recycling spent fuel. Made the
1670 point that there are spent fuel rods buried -- encased in concrete and buried in 39 States. They
1671 retain 90 percent of their energy generation capacity, and you can recover about 96 percent of it. I
1672 think that is somewhat the experience that they have had in France.

1673 Mr. Wagner, you may have been the one that I asked this 3 or 4 years ago, but how long do
1674 you think we could operate if we really invested in recycled spent fuel?

1675 Dr. Wagner. So thank you for the question. And I think actually you might have asked this
1676 question to one of my colleagues in the past, I do recall, if I recall correctly.

1677 By the way, there are no spent fuel rods buried in any States. So let me just note that.
1678 They are in casks --

1679 Mr. Palmer. They are in casks, right.

1680 Dr. Wagner. -- in dry storage and so forth. And so I just want to -- if I may.

1681 So there are estimates in terms of how long we could run off of our commercial fuel in terms
1682 of powering new reactors. Those estimates vary on different assumptions and in terms of the
1683 recovery capabilities, but there are estimates out there that we could run our reactors for 100 years
1684 based on that. But it does depend on a number of details.

1685 Mr. Palmer. Right.

1686 Someone raised the question about cost, and I think it is about 6 percent more is what they
1687 estimate they are paying in France. But the long-term benefit, I think, more than offsets that.

1688 In 2024, Congress passed the Prohibiting Russian Uranium Imports Act with a dual focus of

1689 eliminating our reliance on Russian uranium while leveling the playing field for domestic uranium
1690 producers to make it more economical, competitive, and revitalizing domestic uranium production.

1691 But since that time, Russian uranium has still been flowing into the U.S. under a waiver
1692 process. There has been a concerning up-tick in Chinese uranium exports to the U.S. I am very
1693 concerned about our reliance on adversarial nations for critical minerals, particularly refined
1694 rare-earth elements.

1695 But, Mr. Williams, as a reactor operator, are you concerned about the ongoing influence of
1696 state-owned entities Russia and China on the U.S. nuclear fuel market?

1697 Mr. Williams. So thanks again for the question.

1698 And I can say that, you know, what is in the best interests of our customers in terms of the
1699 operation of our units is that we have a safe and secure, reliable supply of our fuel. And we have
1700 done that for many, many years.

1701 At Southern Company, we have taken a very conservative approach to the sourcing of our
1702 fuel, sourcing fuel from, I would say, more friendly nations to our country and making sure that we
1703 have that reliable supply to that.

1704 So, yes, it is a concern for our company that we have a reliable supply of fuel.

1705 Mr. Palmer. It is one of my top priorities and I think a top priority of this committee to make
1706 sure that we have a secure supply chain, not only of uranium, but also of the processing and refining
1707 of critical minerals and rare-earth elements so that we are no longer dependent on China or any
1708 other adversarial nation for those things.

1709 Dr. Wagner, you mentioned about uranium in your testimony and your concerns about our
1710 reliance as well.

1711 China has successfully converted thorium-232 into uranium-233 in a molten salt reactor.

1712 In Alabama, our State legislature passed a joint resolution last April that the Governor signed
1713 recognizing the value of uranium-233 and offering Alabama as a new home for that material. I

1714 think Redstone Arsenal is among nine installations chose by the Army for its next-generation nuclear
1715 power program, the Janus Program.

1716 What are your thoughts on expending thorium reactors in the United States by utilizing the
1717 remaining 233 that we have for fuel?

1718 Mr. Latta. If I could, the gentleman's time has expired. If you could put that in writing back
1719 to the gentleman, we would greatly appreciate it.

1720 [The information follows:]

1721

1722 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

- 1723
- 1724 Mr. Palmer. Thank you. I yield back.
- 1725 Mr. Latta. Thank you very much.
- 1726 The gentleman yields back the balance of his time.
- 1727 The chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Washington's Eighth District for 5 minutes for
- 1728 questions.

1729 RPTR ZAMORA

1730 EDTR ZAMORA

1731 [1:38 p.m.]

1732 Ms. Schrier. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to our witnesses.

1733 I come from Washington State. Hanford is a strong memory in our State. Actually, it is an
1734 ongoing memory in our State because we are almost 100 years later and we are still dealing with
1735 consequences of plutonium, and I know that is different from energy production, but it weighs
1736 heavily on us.

1737 Despite that, we are also a State that really treasures not emitting energy sources, and there
1738 is overwhelming support both in Washington State for nuclear energy, and I hope you are hearing
1739 bipartisan support here for deploying more nuclear energy. And we are so proud that, together, we
1740 passed the ADVANCE Act to move things along more quickly.

1741 I want to start just with a question, science question, Dr. Wagner. Could you just list some
1742 of the things that could go wrong with nuclear energy power generation, maybe without the NRC
1743 catching things? Could you just list off a couple?

1744 Dr. Wagner. So the NRC has a very robust set of regulations and requirements that are
1745 viewed -- that any nuclear system was reviewed against. And so I have confidence in that system.
1746 The things I worry more about that might go wrong are financial and project execution. They are
1747 really not on these aspects. As long as we continue to have strong regulations and a regulatory
1748 body that is independent from the industry, I really don't want to speculate on that.

1749 Ms. Schrier. So let's touch on that just for a moment --

1750 Dr. Wagner. Sure.

1751 Ms. Schrier. -- because you talked about the independence of the regulatory agency. I
1752 think about, of course, disposal, how do we manage the waste, where do we put the waste. I think
1753 about -- we have had intrusion into the Columbia River and cancers in the area. We live in an

1754 earthquake zone. What would that do? Where do you put a plant? We saw a tsunami in Japan.
1755 We are right at the coast, so I think about these kinds of things as well.

1756 And we have talked a lot today about the need for distance between Department of Energy,
1757 Department of Defense, and nuclear regulation at NRC. And we have seen dismantling by this
1758 administration with, you know, basically approval by my colleagues in this committee for firing of
1759 many of the experts there. Many of the other experts are nearing retirement age.

1760 So I guess my next question is -- I will go to Ms. Korsnick, but I could also take Ms. Greenwald
1761 for this. If you lose that expertise, you have had these firings. We are looking at quadrupling our
1762 capacity for nuclear energy in the next several years. How do you do that and still -- and not have
1763 the sufficiency of oversight and regulation and still earn public support? Because without public
1764 support, we are going to get hung up in these projects.

1765 Ms. Korsnick. Yeah, I am happy to start. We have had a lot of conversation around
1766 independence, and I guess I would just offer that I think the independence and the need for
1767 independence is going to be decided by the courts. And I think we need to really look at the
1768 mandate of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. What are they there to do? And I think our best
1769 focus is, do they have the talent and do they have the folks there that can make those decisions and
1770 move these items forward? And I believe that they do. They have had about a 10 percent
1771 reduction in force, you know, okay --

1772 Ms. Schrier. I am going to cut you off just so I can go to Ms. Greenwald. And I just want to
1773 comment, as you talk about the courts, we have seen almost no pushback from the Supreme Court
1774 to this President's authority to take away bipartisan oversight, and I don't have faith in that.

1775 Ms. Greenwald, would you like to comment about the importance of independence and the
1776 need to restore, and how do we hire up more experts when so many are going to leave through
1777 retirement?

1778 Ms. Greenwald. Yeah. Thank you. So I think, again, the root of all of these

1779 characteristics, like transparency, independence, it is all about making sure that we have public trust.
1780 And so the important thing is that we make sure that we maintain that public trust, and the
1781 independence and transparency is part of that expertise, having enough staff. It is a whole panoply
1782 of things that we have to make sure that we look out for.

1783 I do think that there are ways forward. You know, it has been kind of a long year. I do get
1784 the sense that there are more and more folks realizing the importance of NRC, the importance of
1785 NRC being adequately staffed, the importance of maintaining NRC's credibility. I think that this is
1786 very important, and I think there is still work to be done, but I really do think that we can fix this and
1787 make it better.

1788 Ms. Schrier. And I think as a Congress we must if we want that public support. Thank you,
1789 and I yield back.

1790 Mr. Latta. Thank you very much. The gentlelady's time has expired and yields back.
1791 The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas' Eleventh District for 5 minutes for
1792 questioning.

1793 Mr. Pfluger. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1794 No surprise that I am going to bring up a project in Texas, in Abilene, Texas, that you are
1795 probably aware of with Natura Resources, leading an effort to build a reactor on the campus of
1796 Abilene Christian University, where I have been and I have visited. But they have received formal
1797 commitments from the Department of Energy for both HALEU and the specialized salt required for
1798 the reactor's operation. Natura has been selected to be a part of the DOE reactor pilot program,
1799 and the facility there is completely built. As I mentioned, I just visited it a couple months ago. It is
1800 very impressive.

1801 The State of Texas is also partnering and supplying \$120 million, but these milestones confirm
1802 that the fuel supply, the regulatory approval, and the project readiness are not just speculative, they
1803 are actually happening and they are well ahead and doing very, very well. I think the remaining

1804 obstacle is the processing and the transportation of the materials, which is inherently a
1805 governmental function, and we appreciate the Idaho National Laboratory's help in this.

1806 So the reactor will be built this year, Dr. Wagner. How can INL best support this project and
1807 the goals of the administration to get the required products, including HALEU, to Abilene in a timely
1808 manner to complete the project?

1809 Dr. Wagner. So thank you for the question and the partnership there. I would say that,
1810 you know, the first thing that we have to address and that is being addressed is the actual
1811 fundamental material that is made into a fuel form, the High-Assay LEU that I think you referred to.
1812 That is a fundamental Federal Government decision on who gets what and how much and so forth.

1813 Where either the national laboratory plays a role is we have some of that material on behalf
1814 of the Department of Energy and then we can help with developers move that material from its raw
1815 form into the fuel form that the reactor needs. And so that is the area that we can definitely help
1816 with.

1817 Mr. Pfluger. So -- and I think the frustration has been that they have got -- this is a privately
1818 funded, you know, enterprise, that DOE came to this group and said, will you do this. They said,
1819 sure. And then they get all the way there, and it is like they are at the finish line, they want to get
1820 this done, but the government needs to finish their piece of this. So we recognize that the
1821 availability of the facilities and the equipment for processing materials is limited.

1822 But if there is a prioritization and the use of the INL infrastructure is prioritized for this
1823 project, it sounds like that that is going to speed it up. And what is the best way for congressional
1824 offices to stay informed and to make sure that we continue? Because, I mean, they are well ahead
1825 of any other program of this type.

1826 Dr. Wagner. Yeah. In terms of engagement on access to the materials and prioritization of
1827 resources and facilities at the laboratory, that engagement is best directed towards the Department
1828 of Energy. As a laboratory, I am a Department of Energy laboratory, but I am not a Federal

1829 employee, and I don't make those Federal Government decisions. We take our direction from the
1830 Department of Energy.

1831 Mr. Pfluger. I think what we recognize in this hearing is very significant, because there is a
1832 race, and that race is not just for AI, although that is extremely important, but the race is for an
1833 assortment of energy needs, that that demand is going to continue to increase at an exponential
1834 rate.

1835 And that kind of leads me to a question for Mr. Williams, which -- utilities are seeing
1836 unprecedented load growth for data centers, and how much regulatory certainty is needed before
1837 you can commit nuclear resources to continue to serve that load at scale?

1838 Mr. Williams. So thank you for that question, Congressman. So we are seeing tremendous
1839 load growth, especially in the southeast, and Southern Company is planning to meet that
1840 commitment. You know, we believe that preserving the option for new nuclear generation is
1841 important for our customers as we look for that, but we have got to mitigate the risk that are
1842 associated with that.

1843 We laid those out in our testimony today, and that is our focus, and how do we mitigate those
1844 risks working with -- through public-private partnerships, working with the customers, those data
1845 center customers, and making sure that we can do that. Because what we want to do is, when we
1846 bring that data center on, we want to put downward pressure on rates for the rest of our customers.
1847 That is the model that we have established in Georgia, that is what we want to continue to do, and so
1848 that is what we are focused on.

1849 Mr. Pfluger. Well, thank you. We have to compete at the speed of commerce, and right
1850 now we are competing at the speed of government, which is abysmal.

1851 And, Dr. Wagner, when we think about -- what is the biggest economic driver of nuclear
1852 waste recycling?

1853 Dr. Wagner. The biggest economic --

1854 Mr. Pfluger. Economic driver.

1855 Dr. Wagner. -- driver?

1856 Mr. Pfluger. Yeah.

1857 Dr. Wagner. I would say that mining uranium out of the ground is cheaper. Also -- that is
1858 the economic driver. The other aspect, I think, is that this committee could consider is the Nuclear
1859 Waste Policy Act and whether or not there are incentives with respect to recycling.

1860 Mr. Pfluger. Well, that is kind of my -- that was my followup is what -- you know, what will
1861 provide a model of sustainability so we can continue to use and recycle and use the materials that we
1862 know are valuable?

1863 Dr. Wagner. Well, so there is a number of aspects to that question, but I would say the
1864 Nuclear Waste Policy Act did not envision a future of recycling, and it laid out standard contracts with
1865 utilities where the Department of Energy would take the material. And so that is the model under
1866 the Nuclear Waste Policy Act. If we would like to change that model, then I think we need to go
1867 back and revisit that.

1868 Mr. Pfluger. Hard to have that conversation in 20 seconds, but thank you. I yield back.

1869 Mr. Latta. The gentleman's time has expired and yields back.

1870 The chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Texas' Seventh District for 5 minutes for
1871 questions.

1872 Mrs. Fletcher. Well, thank you, Chairman Latta. And thank you to Ranking Member Castor
1873 and to our witnesses for your testimony today. It has been very helpful. And I think it is clear
1874 from this discussion that for advanced nuclear to succeed, developers need clear rules, rules of the
1875 road, and the freedom to get away from a politicized regulatory process, and that is something I
1876 know has been of concern to a lot of us on this committee this year.

1877 I am really glad that our committee came together in the last Congress to pass the bipartisan
1878 ADVANCE Act, which many of you have mentioned in your testimony today. And that will really, I

1879 think, spur the nuclear renaissance that we are witnessing across the country, and certainly in my
1880 home State of Texas.

1881 But in the wake of this, I think, really solid bipartisan success, what we have seen is, this year,
1882 President Trump has orchestrated another partisan attack on a key government agency, and that is
1883 the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Over the course of the last year, President Trump illegally
1884 fired a commissioner, installed DOGE cronies to bypass career civil servants, and has taken several
1885 actions to erode the NRC's independence.

1886 And ultimately, and unfortunately, this just isn't the first time that President Trump has
1887 attempted to take away agency independence, and it is likely not going to be the last. And so every
1888 member in this room, every Member of the Congress, and every witness in the room, knows that
1889 keeping regulators like NRC and FERC independent is really crucial to the stability and the safety of
1890 the power sector. And so I just urge my colleagues on this committee not to turn a blind eye to
1891 these attacks, on the ability to keep our constituents safe, to provide the regulatory environment for
1892 nuclear development really to flourish.

1893 And in Texas, we are seeing that. We just heard a little bit from my friend from the other
1894 side of the State, Mr. Pfluger, talking about a tremendous amount of interest in developing
1895 innovative advanced reactors. Advances in next-generation nuclear technologies, including SMRs,
1896 in recent years offer huge potential advancements. And I do think -- I like to say in this committee a
1897 lot: I really think Texas is leading the way in all sectors, and it is also true in nuclear that we are
1898 doing so many things.

1899 In my part of the State, we are excited about X-energy's partnership with Dow, which will be
1900 the first grid-scale advanced reactor at a site along the Texas Gulf Coast. And that project, once it is
1901 deployed, could really open a new frontier for advanced nuclear applications in the industrial sector.
1902 And so we are excited about this, and we want to see a successful and diverse supply of energy.

1903 And so that, of course, leads to some questions. And, Ms. Greenwald, I want to follow up on

1904 some questions. I know you have already touched on some of this in your answers earlier, but I do
1905 think it is worth discussing in that President Trump's nuclear executive orders have initiated a lot of
1906 complicated rulemakings at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The career civil servants that work
1907 on the Commission are some of the brightest minds in the field, but their jobs are made harder by
1908 uncoordinated directives and the President's effort to inject politics into what should be a really
1909 nonpartisan commission.

1910 And I have heard concerns from nuclear energy professionals that the volume and complexity
1911 of the rulemakings created by this administration and the executive orders coming out of the Trump
1912 administration could lead to an uncertain regulatory environment that could really stymie progress
1913 on nuclear development. So can you speak to the importance, I think, of the NRC's independence
1914 for a stable and predictable regulatory environment?

1915 Ms. Greenwald. Yes. I think I have spoken already, but happy to say it again. I think it is
1916 this -- it is not just independence; it is also transparency, and it is also having the right expertise. So
1917 it is several things, and they all have to work together, and we need all of them.

1918 We do think -- and since I have talked about this less, I will say a little more. We have some
1919 recommendations about how to help with employee retention and recruiting, because that is a key
1920 problem, and we have a report on that which we are happy to share.

1921 We had a Chatham House Rules workshop earlier this -- I guess it was last year with former
1922 commissioners, former executive directors for operation, former NRC employees at all levels of the
1923 agency, and came up with a number of recommendations about how to make things go better at
1924 NRC.

1925 We do think that making sure that the staff is excellent and empowered and accountable is
1926 really important, and we really do want to focus on that. And as I said, we do think -- we are
1927 concerned about the transparency and independence issues, but we actually think they can be
1928 addressed, and we are actually raising them because we think this committee can help address them.

1929 Mrs. Fletcher. That is great. Well, I have gone over my time. I have a few more
1930 questions for you, so I am going to submit them in writing --

1931 Ms. Greenwald. Sure.

1932 Mrs. Fletcher. -- on some really down in the weeds, but I think it is hugely important. I am
1933 grateful for your work. I am grateful for all of your testimony.

1934 And I am grateful for the few extra seconds you gave me, Chairman Latta, and I will yield
1935 back.

1936 Mr. Latta. Thank you very much. The gentlelady's time has expired and yields back.

1937 The chair now recognizes the gentleman from New York's 23rd District for 5 minutes for
1938 questions.

1939 Mr. Langworthy. Thank you very much, Chairman Latta.

1940 As we have heard from several members of this subcommittee today, nuclear energy offers
1941 clear benefits. It provides reliable zero-emission power. It supports high-quality jobs and
1942 strengthens our grid resilience. It is an incredibly important tool for us to have in the energy
1943 toolbox, and it obviously is the future. But it works best as part of a balanced, all-of-the-above
1944 energy choice strategy that expands options and strengthens the grid rather than forcing artificial
1945 tradeoffs that raise costs, undermine reliability, or distort the free market.

1946 Across the country we are seeing renewed interest in nuclear energy, and that is a good thing,
1947 including in my home State of New York. The State has recently directed New York Power Authority
1948 to pursue development of a zero-emission advanced nuclear facility in upstate New York. I see that
1949 less as a final decision than more of a reflection of a broader shift towards reconsidering nuclear
1950 energy to expand energy choice.

1951 However, announcing a project is only the initial step. Whether a nuclear facility can be
1952 delivered depends far less on press releases than on the full set of processes that govern execution,
1953 including licensing pathways, environmental reviews, siting approvals, agency coordination, and the

1954 predictability of timelines from start to finish. In New York, that is where the real challenges will
1955 emerge.

1956 Mr. Williams, when States announce support for nuclear energy, what kinds of State policies
1957 help ensure projects can actually be delivered efficiently and cost effectively, and what kinds of
1958 policies tend to get in the way?

1959 Mr. Williams. So thank you for your question. From a State policy perspective, I will talk
1960 from the experience that we had at Vogtle. We experienced a number of policies that were very
1961 helpful in our State. One policy that was very helpful was construction work in progress that
1962 allowed us to save our customers money by ultimately having them -- they were paying the interest
1963 of the loan and the cost during the construction of the project. That is a very kind of important
1964 aspect of State policy, and it was -- saved our customers hundreds of millions of dollars in the long
1965 term.

1966 We are also seeing States that are assisting with funds, grant funds for development that are
1967 helping kind of move things along quicker while utilities get more certainty around the risk
1968 mitigations that will be necessary ultimately before utilities move forward. Those are the types of
1969 policies that we think would be helpful.

1970 Mr. Langworthy. Very good.

1971 In many States like New York, the permitting and the environmental review systems in place
1972 today were designed during a very, very different era, one where the focus was often on slowing and
1973 constraining major infrastructure projects rather than delivering them efficiently. Even when there
1974 is clear predictability of timelines from start to finish, you know, we have this new interest in nuclear,
1975 and those processes can involve overlapping agency reviews and open-ended timelines and litigation
1976 risk.

1977 Ms. Korsnick, how important is it for State environmental review siting and permitting
1978 process to be aligned if advanced nuclear projects are going to move forward, and does uncertainty

1979 in those processes ever become a deciding factor?

1980 Ms. Korsnick. Well, thanks for the question. Yeah, I think it is very important, and it is the
1981 front end of the process, right, in terms of ensuring that your process and your project gets off on a
1982 good, clean start. And so getting that permitting and getting those environmental reviews done
1983 and done expeditiously, I think, is very important.

1984 You know, nuclear is a major project. So if you can imagine, sort of any major thing that you
1985 are trying to build, if you have inefficiencies and you have things that take much too long, they are
1986 dragging down other investments that you have made, it is a highly capital-intensive process, so you
1987 are paying interest on some of those things. So the longer it takes, you know, the more expensive it
1988 is.

1989 Mr. Langworthy. Thank you very much.

1990 Now, Mr. Williams, from an investment standpoint, how do long and uncertain State
1991 permitting timelines affect decisions to move forward with advanced nuclear projects even when the
1992 technology in the site are sound?

1993 Mr. Williams. Well, so thanks again for the question. And I will reiterate something that
1994 Ms. Korsnick just said. You know, once you begin construction and you have workers on the
1995 ground, you know, the capital cost that you are expending is significant. So anything that can be
1996 done to make sure that permitting is efficient, that nothing can hold up that construction is
1997 absolutely critical for you to move forward and to be able to deliver the project as affordably and on
1998 schedule as possible.

1999 Mr. Langworthy. Very good. Thank you.

2000 As New York expresses renewed interest in nuclear energy, understanding how State-level
2001 processes affect execution will be critical. I really thank you very much, and I yield back the balance
2002 of my time.

2003 Mr. Latta. Thank you very much. The gentleman yields back.

2004 And the chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas' 33rd District for 5 minutes for
2005 questions.

2006 Mr. Veasey. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

2007 I think that we all know that nuclear's biggest strength is its steady and dispatchable power,
2008 and that is very important in Texas as we continue to experience record growth and extreme
2009 weather, and also, what comes along with that obviously is demanding -- electricity demands. So I
2010 am very happy that Congress is -- that we are working to pass the ADVANCE Act and provide
2011 \$2.7 billion in investment and domestic and uranium enrichment. I think that is hugely important.

2012 I was very proud to vote in favor of both of those efforts, and I want to continue to work to
2013 unleash American nuclear energy with the inclusion of the International Nuclear Energy Act in this
2014 year's NDAA. That bill is very critical for reclaiming American leadership in the global market and
2015 ensuring that U.S. safety standards set the global bar.

2016 But for all the talk around energy dominance, lasting dominance is only possible with public
2017 and international confidence. And I want to be clear about that. Dominance is not just about
2018 what we build here. It is about setting the global safety and security standards that our adversaries,
2019 like China and Russia, are also currently ignoring.

2020 The Trump administration's attacks on the NRC's independence threaten the very gold
2021 standard of safety that makes our technology the most desirable in the world. And so safety isn't a
2022 bottleneck to be bypassed. It is the product of what we are selling around the world, and I want to
2023 be clear about that. We do not want to erode NRC's independence and lose our competitive edge.

2024 And so I wanted to ask Judi Greenwald. I have cosponsored Representative Griffith's
2025 efficient nuclear licensing hearing bill. This removes the requirement for the NRC to hold a public
2026 hearing at the end of the licensing process if the license is not contested by an affected party. That
2027 makes sense and it is supported by a wide range of stakeholders, but if we allow the administration
2028 to start cutting corners and silencing safety commissioners, then what does that do for public trust?

2029 I think that that hurts nuclear.

2030 Can we achieve energy dominance if the public or our international partners no longer
2031 believe the regulator is independent?

2032 Ms. Greenwald. Thank you for the question, and thanks for your leadership on this
2033 legislation.

2034 We are very supportive of eliminating mandatory hearings. That is an example
2035 where -- mandatory hearings where there is no issue, because if there is no issue, it doesn't make
2036 sense to have a mandatory hearing. We think there are a set of issues around this. The ADVANCE
2037 Act addressed many of them. There are more to be addressed. So we think you can improve
2038 efficiency at the same time as you can actually maintain safety and transparency and public trust and
2039 independence.

2040 So we think you have to do both. I think it is very important that we do both, and we think
2041 that it is possible. And we certainly see the elimination of the mandatory hearing requirement
2042 when there is no issue. It just -- you know, we don't want the NRC to be spending time on issues
2043 that aren't safety significant.

2044 Mr. Veasey. Right.

2045 Ms. Greenwald. And so I think this is sort of our approach to NRC efficiency is to eliminate
2046 processes that aren't helpful but to also -- but to maintain the ones that are. So I think that we can
2047 do both, and we are, you know, ready and willing and able to work with people to make sure that we
2048 get that outcome.

2049 Mr. Veasey. Yeah. Well, thank you very much.

2050 Ms. Korsnick, you have called for predictable licensing. If the NRC is treated like a political
2051 arm of the White House where rules can change every election, how does that affect the long-term
2052 investment decisions of your member companies? Do political interference make nuclear projects
2053 less or more attractive to Wall Street?

2054 Ms. Korsnick. I think predictability is key not only for investors but for people that operate
2055 and build these assets. I think that is very important. You know, I will stress that there will be a
2056 lot of regulations that are coming out, especially starting this year, and there are comment periods
2057 available. So we do expect that there will be public engagement as these regulations roll out before
2058 they are finalized. I think that is also a very important part of the process, which is one of the ways
2059 that we will maintain that public confidence.

2060 Mr. Veasey. Yeah. Thank you very much.

2061 Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

2062 Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentleman yields back the balance of his time.

2063 The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Colorado's Eighth District for 5 minutes for
2064 questions.

2065 Mr. Evans. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, to our ranking member as well, and, of course, to our
2066 witnesses for taking the time to come today.

2067 We need more energy. I think everybody agrees on that. My local electric utility, for
2068 instance, says that they are going to need three times as much energy in the next 10 years as they
2069 have today, and that is after already doubling in the last 10 years. Unfortunately, my Democrat
2070 colleagues are pushing the most expensive form of energy on Americans, and that is not conjecture.
2071 That is from the Democrat-controlled Colorado Energy Office, which commissioned a study that
2072 found last year that relying solely on variable power and battery storage is the most expensive option
2073 out there. It would cost Coloradans alone \$17 billion extra, or an additional \$2,800 per person.

2074 And so to lower costs for Americans and Coloradans, we need an all-of-the-above balanced
2075 strategy that includes reliable, affordable, safe baseload power from nuclear generation. This is
2076 something that is important to me in my district because we had the last operational nuclear
2077 generating facility in Colorado at the Fort Saint Vrain facility. Unfortunately, like many other
2078 nuclear plants, this one was decommissioned. And to this day, there remain far too many

2079 roadblocks and lack of incentives to invest in clean, affordable, safe, and reliable nuclear generation
2080 with many Colorado Democrats still opposing nuclear energy.

2081 So my first question will be to Ms. Korsnick. Last fall, I introduced a bipartisan permitting
2082 reform framework, alongside my Democrat colleague, Rep. Peters, which was endorsed by the
2083 Problem Solvers Caucus. One key provision, which was mentioned in your testimony, was ending
2084 mandatory hearings for nuclear facility construction. Can you explain how the current system adds
2085 unnecessary delays to bringing generation online and how modernizing the process can benefit the
2086 industry?

2087 Ms. Korsnick. Certainly. Thank you. The mandatory hearings -- and I know it just came
2088 up in the last question. The mandatory hearings add, like, in the ZIP Code of 6 months potentially,
2089 you know, at the end of the process. And even the NRC agrees that the mandatory hearings are
2090 something that can be removed. It gives you the impression that it is public engagement, but there
2091 is not actually public engagement in the mandatory hearing process at the end. And so it just
2092 becomes a bit of unnecessary administrative work that is done in that process and that can be done
2093 elsewhere, not in series.

2094 Mr. Evans. Does removing those impact in any way the safety of the nuclear facility?

2095 Ms. Korsnick. Absolutely not.

2096 Mr. Evans. Thank you.

2097 Going to Mr. Wagner from the Idaho National Lab. I know we have been talking mostly
2098 about fission today, but I wanted to discuss fusion as well, as we look to the next decade and to
2099 President Trump and Secretary Wright's roadmap to a commercial fusion plant within a decade. I
2100 actually just toured Xcimer Energy south of my district with Secretary Wright. They are a national
2101 leader in inertial fusion commercialization, and we had a chance to talk about that technology.

2102 Can you comment on INL's work on the tritium fuel cycle technologies, things like breeding
2103 and recovery, as well as using thick liquids to breed tritium, extract diffusion energy, and protect the

2104 structural walls from the fusion radiation?

2105 Dr. Wagner. Yes. So thank you very much for that question.

2106 A lot of times people think about Idaho National Laboratory and they think about fission
2107 energy, which is our primary focus, but as you acknowledged, we do a lot of work in fusion. And so
2108 as an applied national laboratory, applied energy national laboratory, our role in fusion is focused on
2109 the practical challenges of deploying it, particularly the tritium fuel cycle that you referred to, those
2110 technologies, and the material performance around those.

2111 So at the laboratory we have unique capabilities relevant to this that are born out of our
2112 fission part of our laboratory, things like the advanced test reactor for materials and fuels
2113 performance testing, things like the STAR Facility for handling tritium where we support research in
2114 the tritium breeding, in recovery, tritium material interface and interactions under radiation and
2115 thermal considerations, all things that are very important for tritium breeding and management in
2116 fusion facilities. And so we maintain those facilities primarily for our fission R&D program, but they
2117 have direct relevance to the fusion, so there is a nice leveraging that happens there.

2118 I would also note, born out of our fission --

2119 Mr. Evans. I can give you like 15 more seconds.

2120 Dr. Wagner. Oh, sorry.

2121 Mr. Evans. I have one more that I want to ask.

2122 Dr. Wagner. Pardon me?

2123 Mr. Evans. I said I have got one more question, so if you can, like, get like 10 more seconds.

2124 Dr. Wagner. I would just say, also, in addition to that, we are leveraging our multiphysics
2125 state-of-the-art modeling and simulation capabilities for this tritium research and design and analysis
2126 as well. And then our public-private partnership experience on the fission side is being leveraged in
2127 the fusion side as we work with private companies on their efforts to commercialize.

2128 Mr. Evans. Awesome.

2129 My final 25 seconds, Mr. Williams, Ms. Korsnick, we have got a lot of uranium in Colorado.
2130 Can you talk about what would happen if we have the continued imports of Chinese nuclear fuel to
2131 the U.S. supply system?

2132 Mr. Latta. You have about 12 seconds.

2133 Ms. Korsnick. I will jump in real quick. We absolutely want to mine uranium here in the
2134 United States, and we have the capability to do that. We also have to be thoughtful that uranium is
2135 a global business, and it is important that we stay involved in the global sector. And so I think it is
2136 just important that we look at having a diversified fuel supply.

2137 Mr. Evans. Mine more of it. Got it. Thanks.

2138 I yield back.

2139 Mr. Latta. Thank you very much. The gentleman yields back.

2140 And the chair now recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts' Fourth District for
2141 5 minutes for questions.

2142 Mr. Auchincloss. Thank you, Chair.

2143 To start with, responding to my colleague from Colorado with just the continued misinformed
2144 attack on variable energy, in particular offshore wind, for the 15,000th time, nobody is talking about
2145 exclusively relying on variable energy and battery storage. In fact, I think Massachusetts should lift
2146 its moratorium on nuclear production and build more nuclear power plants for higher baseload
2147 power.

2148 What we are asking for is for the ability for investors in States to make their own decisions
2149 about the appropriate portfolio of energy sources. In Massachusetts, we have a tremendous
2150 amount of offshore wind, and it made a lot of sense. We could have powered 200,000 homes with
2151 our offshore wind, which actually it blows so hard off the coast of Massachusetts that it matches the
2152 baseload reliability of other sources of energy like natural gas. And we could have traded with
2153 Hydro-Quebec for off-peak hours. It made all the sense in the world, but the administration's

2154 arbitrary and capricious practices have made it harder to invest in that energy source and other
2155 energy sources where investors have to put capital at risk for the long term.

2156 So I just -- I don't want the lectures anymore from the GOP on all-of-the-above energy
2157 strategy when they are silent about this administration canceling long-term investments in the types
2158 of energy generation that we need, because it is going to make it harder for us to do nuclear, which
2159 we all agree about.

2160 So now onto nuclear. I want to focus particularly on ALARA, Dr. Wagner. Last year, you
2161 and your colleagues at Idaho National Labs published a report -- which I would like to enter into the
2162 record -- proposing that we should maintain an annual occupational whole body dose limit of 5,000
2163 milligrams per year and eliminate all, quote, as low as reasonably achievable requirements and
2164 subsequent limits below this threshold.

2165 I think this is one of the critical issues for this whole industry. I think we have got to get this
2166 right. ADVANCE 1.0 left this one on the table. I think we have got to get it right in ADVANCE 2.0.

2167 You noted that this change could potentially reduce radiation protection costs by millions and
2168 correct misconceptions about the risks associated with nuclear tech. Dr. Wagner, give us like the
2169 plain English reason for this, please, in the next minute.

2170 Dr. Wagner. Yeah. So I will try to be quick on this. There is a lot that we could talk
2171 about, but the reality is, is that we now have decades of experience and data related to the health
2172 effects of radiation, and we now know a lot more than we knew four or five decades ago. And so
2173 the whole theory behind this as low as reasonably achievable posture, it was a prudent posture when
2174 you don't have as much information and data as we have today. We now do. And so
2175 driving -- when the industry is driving and the regulatory bodies are driving dose rates to zero, far
2176 below what we experience from natural background radiation, there is no health benefits to be had
2177 from that, and so that is fundamentally what is at issue.

2178 Mr. Auchincloss. Yeah. And just really, like, make that really visceral for us. So the

2179 5,000 millirems that you are arguing for, like, what kind of exposure is that for a typical person? Is
2180 it like an airline flight? Is that -- you know, comes from fruit? I know fruit has radioactive
2181 exposure.

2182 Dr. Wagner. Yes. So let me first say, 5,000 millirems is for occupational workers, which are
2183 tracked very closely --

2184 Mr. Auchincloss. Yeah.

2185 Dr. Wagner. -- in terms of what their exposures are. We cannot find any statistically
2186 significant negative health effects in the data from low-dose rate radiation exposure of twice that.
2187 And so 5,000 is the current limit, by the way. And so what we are saying is, since we don't see any
2188 health effects there, why are we driving to dose rates well below there.

2189 Mr. Auchincloss. Right.

2190 Dr. Wagner. So that is where the ALARA concept comes in.

2191 Mr. Auchincloss. And your argument is that when you drive to ALARA below that 5,000, the
2192 marginal cost versus marginal -- there is no marginal benefit, you are saying, because there is no
2193 health benefit whatsoever.

2194 Dr. Wagner. Correct.

2195 Mr. Auchincloss. And the marginal cost is exorbitant. Is that fair to say?

2196 Dr. Wagner. It increases significantly as you drive down towards zero, absolutely.

2197 Mr. Auchincloss. Right. For no public health gain.

2198 Ms. Korsnick, if we got this right in an ADVANCE 2.0, what would that do for the nuclear
2199 innovation?

2200 Ms. Korsnick. I think the real key is where are you applying ALARA. So if you have already
2201 built a plant and you are talking about using ALARA for ensuring that you are operating and
2202 ensuring --

2203 Mr. Auchincloss. For new construction.

2204 Ms. Korsnick. -- those things -- yeah -- I would say there is, you know, minimal benefit. But
2205 for new construction, if you apply ALARA in the design phase, it goes like this: I could build that wall
2206 2 feet thick; well, but I would have more shielding if it was 3 feet; well, I would have more shielding if
2207 it was 4 feet; well, I would have more shielding if it was 5 feet. So you can see quickly how you can
2208 over design things. As he said, you are chasing a number that is sort of not real. And the more
2209 concrete and steel that you put in a plant, the higher the cost.

2210 So it is really a very basic -- ALARA can work in certain phases, like an operational phase.
2211 ALARA in the design phase is challenging, and we think it should be removed.

2212 Mr. Auchincloss. If we build airplanes with ALARA for radiation exposure, nothing would
2213 ever fly. Is that fair to say?

2214 Ms. Korsnick. That is fair.

2215 Mr. Auchincloss. I yield back.

2216 Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentleman yields back the balance of his time.

2217 The chair now recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina's Seventh District for 5 minutes
2218 for questions.

2219 Mr. Fry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2220 South Carolina has long been at the epicenter of America's nuclear enterprise. It is not just
2221 part of our energy mix; it is the backbone of our grid, our workforce. We are heavily reliant on
2222 nuclear. We are the home of four nuclear plants, seven operating reactors, and a very deeply
2223 experienced nuclear workforce.

2224 Last month, I had the opportunity to speak to the South Carolina Nuclear Summit at the
2225 University of South Carolina, which was hosted in partnership with Palmetto Nuclear Coalition.
2226 What was striking about the discussion that I thought was that there was a unified message that
2227 South Carolina was not just debating on whether nuclear was going to be part of our future. We
2228 were actively building the next chapter in nuclear deployment. The leadership is now being

2229 matched -- or that leadership is now being matched with actual action.

2230 In recent weeks, Santee Cooper, which is a State-owned utility, approved a memorandum of
2231 understanding with Brookfield Asset Management to advance a disciplined, private, capital-led
2232 feasibility process to complete two partially done AP1000 units at the V.C. Summer site.
2233 Independent analysis shows that that would power 1.5 million homes. That is huge.

2234 At the same time, electricity demand is surging. Growth, manufacturing, AI, data centers, all
2235 part of it. And so nuclear energy is no longer just optional; it is essential to our grid. Congress
2236 obviously acted recently through the ADVANCE Act. States like South Carolina are ready to move.
2237 The Trump administration is ready to move. You are ready to move. I think we all agree we need
2238 more of it in this country.

2239 Ms. Korsnick, Congress passed the ADVANCE Act to ensure that nuclear licensing is efficient
2240 and is much more streamlined. From an industry perspective, where is the NRC making real
2241 progress in implementing the ADVANCE Act, and where are you still seeing friction that could slow
2242 large-scale projects like V.C. Summer in South Carolina?

2243 Ms. Korsnick. Yeah, thank you. And thank you again for the work on the ADVANCE Act, to
2244 the whole subcommittee. I think it has been incredibly helpful.

2245 I think we have seen real tangible progress. I mean, just listen to some recent
2246 announcements on, say, subsequent license renewal or some of these construction permits, et
2247 cetera. In fact, both X-energy and TerraPower are expecting construction permits this year, and
2248 that would be literally, you know, in record time as compared to what we would have had years ago.
2249 And so I think those are a direct relation to the attention on the ADVANCE Act in complying with that.

2250 You know, I think the challenge, as we have mentioned before, is we haven't built a lot in the
2251 United States, and so --

2252 Mr. Fry. It has been a while, right?

2253 Ms. Korsnick. -- even if you are finishing the partially built units there at V.C. Summer. I

2254 think it is, you know, very important that, from a nuclear oversight perspective, that roles and
2255 responsibilities are very clear from a construction perspective. They just haven't played that role as
2256 much. I think what the work is that they did on Vogtle was great, but I would say it was kind of their
2257 first real experience in decades on managing --

2258 Mr. Fry. True.

2259 Ms. Korsnick. -- you know, construction. So I think that is something that still needs to
2260 have some attention paid to it.

2261 Mr. Fry. Thank you for that.

2262 Mr. Williams, utilities across the country are currently responsible for storing nuclear fuel
2263 onsite often for decades longer than maybe originally intended. From a utility and operator
2264 perspective, how do you view advanced recycling in this role and fuel management technology as a
2265 part of a long-term solution on clearing existing fuel inventories?

2266 Mr. Williams. Sure. So thank you for that question, Congressman.

2267 First, I just want to say, you know, the safe storage of our fuel is a critical mission that we
2268 have, and we have been safely storing our fuel at our site for more than 50 years.

2269 Related to recycling, we are obviously very interested in all the solutions that are being
2270 considered around spent nuclear fuel. We do want to make sure that there is a focus on
2271 affordability. I think it was mentioned earlier in the hearing that the recycled uranium has an
2272 increased cost relative to natural uranium products, and so we would want to make sure that, for the
2273 benefit of our customers, we could provide that fuel to them in an affordable way.

2274 Mr. Fry. So Southern Company, then, would support efforts to recycle or reprocess -- and
2275 maybe you already do, I don't know, but you would support that?

2276 Mr. Williams. Southern Company would support recycling spent nuclear fuel if that made
2277 sense for our customer from an affordability perspective.

2278 Mr. Fry. What role do you think the Federal Government should play in that, if any?

2279 Mr. Williams. I think the opportunity for the Federal Government in this space is really
2280 related to making sure that the technology has advanced in a way that perhaps it could be done in an
2281 affordable way.

2282 Mr. Fry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think you shaved off a couple minutes because that
2283 went way too quick. But I see that my time has expired, so I will yield back.

2284 Mr. Latta. Trust me, we didn't shave off any of your time. The gentleman's time has
2285 expired and yields back.

2286 The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas' 12th District for 5 minutes for questions.

2287 Mr. Goldman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much. Thank you to all the panelists for
2288 being here today.

2289 This question goes to Dr. Wagner and Ms. Korsnick. In a November 2024 report, the State
2290 Commission, the State of Texas, Texas Advanced Nuclear Reactor Working Group noted that the
2291 Nuclear Regulatory Commission may face an overwhelming surge of advanced nuclear reactor siting
2292 applications by the end of the decade. Texas working group recommends Congress consider
2293 delegating early site permitting authority for advanced nuclear reactors to States like Texas, allowing
2294 Texas to control its own siting processes and timelines.

2295 From each of your perspectives, do you think the potential delegation of early site permitting
2296 authority for advanced nuclear reactors could benefit the nuclear industry and reduce timelines for
2297 projects serving our data centers and manufacturing growth? And we will let Ms. Korsnick answer
2298 first.

2299 Ms. Korsnick. Yeah. I am happy to frame it out. First, I mean, we are happy to continue
2300 engage in this conversation, but honestly, having it done in one way I think is actually more beneficial
2301 to the industry, where we can put pressure on the agency to get more efficient at doing it but we are
2302 all doing it the same way. The one challenge we have if we delegate this to the States is we could
2303 have 50 ways of getting this done, and it is harder to make the process efficient if there is 50 ways to

2304 do it.

2305 So on one hand, I know States like it for the control. On the other hand, I think we have to
2306 look at this in terms of this is how we are going to learn to get better in the same way that you want
2307 a common design. We should have a common design on the environmental and the early site
2308 permitting.

2309 Mr. Goldman. Great. Thank you.

2310 Dr. Wagner?

2311 Dr. Wagner. I would support what Maria Korsnick said.

2312 Mr. Goldman. Even though Texas does it better than anybody and does it best, so --

2313 Ms. Korsnick. Well, everybody could do it Texas' way.

2314 Mr. Goldman. There is a good answer.

2315 Ms. Korsnick, the University of Texas has partnered with NEI and many other industry
2316 education and governmental organizations to publish a report on the nuclear workforce
2317 developments needed in Texas. This is an example of national and State-level coordination on the
2318 critical need for resurging nuclear industry. Can industry solve the shortage without expanding
2319 university nuclear programs?

2320 Ms. Korsnick. No, I don't believe so. I think we do need to expand these programs
2321 because there is going to be so much more nuclear in our future. We need more talent.

2322 Mr. Goldman. And if Congress were to increase funding for university nuclear programs,
2323 would that support the companies NEI represents by training more Americans to work for the
2324 industry?

2325 Ms. Korsnick. Absolutely.

2326 Mr. Goldman. Thank you.

2327 Dr. Wagner, the State of Texas funded an \$18 million research program at the University of
2328 Texas to develop digital twins for advanced reactors. That program has already improved reactor

2329 operations at the nuclear reactors on the University of Texas campus. Researchers at UT have
2330 collaborated with Idaho National Lab staff to benefit from computational work led by the national
2331 labs and share results from the digital twin programs at UT Austin that support the DOE's artificial
2332 intelligence for nuclear programs. Does INL's mission depend on a strong university nuclear
2333 program pipeline?

2334 Dr. Wagner. Yes, it does.

2335 Mr. Goldman. And if Congress were to increase funding for university nuclear programs,
2336 would that support the critical energy and national security mandate the national labs are tasked
2337 with?

2338 Dr. Wagner. Yes, it would.

2339 Mr. Goldman. And how will INL help transfer technology developed at universities to
2340 industries such as these digital twins for nuclear reactors?

2341 Dr. Wagner. In a number of ways. Through our partners, through our direct partnerships
2342 with those private companies, which I have talked to extensively about in the written testimony, but
2343 also through the development of the people that work with us from the universities that may actually
2344 not come to the laboratory but actually go to those commercial companies.

2345 Mr. Goldman. All right. Thank you very much.

2346 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield the balance of my time.

2347 Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentleman yields back the balance of his time.

2348 The chair now recognizes the gentlelady from North Dakota, the at-large representative, for
2349 5 minutes for questions.

2350 Mrs. Fedorchak. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2351 I thank you all for sharing your time and your expertise with us today. Really important
2352 hearing. I was pleased to be able to be part of it.

2353 A couple questions for you. Starting with you, Ms. Korsnick. So in my State of North

2354 Dakota, we don't have nuclear. We have coal. We have got natural gas. We have a lot of wind.
2355 We would love to get into nuclear. We are very open to it. But I am curious, in your experience,
2356 are investors more hesitant to commit capital in States like that that do not have nuclear
2357 investments?

2358 Ms. Korsnick. I don't think so. I think the investment community broadly is becoming
2359 incredibly interested in nuclear, and I don't think it is a mark against a State if they don't have it yet,
2360 you know, a new-to-nuclear State. I think just, in general, the investment community is becoming
2361 much more bullish on nuclear at this time. And even, also, look at some of the AI companies,
2362 mainstream companies, Google and Microsoft and whatnot, also expressing strong interest in
2363 nuclear. I think that encourages this investment, because they are interested in partnering with
2364 companies that want to build nuclear.

2365 Mrs. Fedorchak. Okay. Thank you.

2366 Also for you, Ms. Korsnick. You talked a lot about the ADVANCE Act and the need for
2367 Congress to kind of stay on top of it and its implementation. Do you think it is time for a status
2368 report, or could you identify any areas where you are concerned that it isn't being implemented or
2369 we should be following up, asking more questions?

2370 Ms. Korsnick. I do think it is time. Again, I will say, for the NRC's perspective, I think they
2371 actually have some good data points to share to demonstrate that they have made some significant
2372 progress, and I think you will see, as a direct result of the ADVANCE Act.

2373 At the same token, you have heard a lot of conversation today about staffing at the NRC. I
2374 would say, you were very thoughtful in putting some things in the ADVANCE Act that are some tools
2375 for the NRC to use to help with staffing, right, some retention elements, some things for bonus, some
2376 pay structures. And so I think with the concerns on staffing it would be a great opportunity to see
2377 are they using those tools that you put in the ADVANCE Act to help them with their staffing.

2378 Mrs. Fedorchak. All right. Very good. Thank you.

2379 Let's see, Mr. Williams, can't leave Southern Company off the hook without getting another
2380 question. I have a lot of experience with your company and have appreciated the interaction over
2381 the years.

2382 You talked a lot about some of the risks and the challenges that your company face. And
2383 could you share a little bit more about your ideas for de-risking these investments and not leaving
2384 companies like yours kind of out there bearing the brunt of proving out some of these new
2385 technologies?

2386 Mr. Williams. Sure. Thank you for the question. We have viewed the risk in kind of three
2387 areas. The first is the initial capital cost investments that is required. There are a number of tools
2388 available today, whether they are investment tax credits, production tax credits. The Loan Program
2389 Office was a critical asset to us during the Vogtle project. Those are all things that allowed us to
2390 bring -- that would bring down the initial capital investment that is required.

2391 The second item is, as we expend that capital over the long construction period, we need to
2392 do things to protect the credit rating of the developer during that period of time. So the ability to
2393 transfer those tax credits provides the cash flow necessary, it maintains the credit rating of the utility
2394 with the developer while they are building, and, again, protects ratepayers from downgrades in that
2395 utility credit rating.

2396 And then last is the macroeconomic risk. I highlighted in my testimony today, you know,
2397 while we built Vogtle we experienced three macroeconomic events that ultimately impacted the cost
2398 and schedule of our project. And we don't believe that as we rebuild this industry in the United
2399 States that our customers and our companies should be on the hook for those costs. For instance,
2400 we experienced a global pandemic. Our customers shouldn't have to pay for that type of risk. So
2401 a solution to help protect against those macroeconomic events to protect our customers from those
2402 that occur.

2403 Mrs. Fedorchak. Okay. Very good. Happy to work with you on your ideas on that.

2404 I have just 25 seconds, and I did want to get a few thoughts from Dr. Wagner on updating the
2405 Waste Policy Act. Can you share some quick ideas for what you think should be done to make that
2406 more --

2407 Dr. Wagner. So I would say, in the time I have, I can't say a lot, but I would say it in a high
2408 level, and that is the Nuclear Waste Policy Act was developed more than 40 years ago in a very
2409 different time when we were not building out new nuclear in the way that we are, and we were not
2410 interested as a Nation in recycling and many other aspects. And so there is a number of
2411 other -- there is a number of aspects in there with respect to the structure of it, the incentives that
2412 are there, and the cost controls of the Nuclear Waste Fund that I think should be reconsidered.

2413 Mrs. Fedorchak. So if my staff followed back up with you, could we have a more in-depth
2414 conversation on that?

2415 Dr. Wagner. That would be great.

2416 Mrs. Fedorchak. That would be great. Thank you. I yield back.

2417 Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentlelady's time has expired and yields back.

2418 The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Oregon's Second District for 5 minutes for
2419 questions.

2420 Mr. Bentz. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2421 And thanks to all of you for your patience with all of us today.

2422 Let's stick with the waste issue. I am from Oregon. It is one of the States with a ban. I
2423 was just looking at the list of States with some sort of restrictions -- New Jersey, Massachusetts,
2424 Oregon, Hawaii, a bunch of them. So you said that whatever lies on this space -- because I am not
2425 familiar with what we are doing federally. I certainly know what happened in Oregon. What can
2426 we do to address that issue now that has changed in the 40 years since, or actually more than that?

2427 Dr. Wagner. So, first of all, you come from the State, as you know well -- and I should start
2428 with thank you for the question. But the Trojan reactor was prematurely shut down and

2429 decommissioned, and so you are probably familiar with that site, that there is nothing left there
2430 except for the spent fuel casks that house the spent fuel safely and securely.

2431 And what I would imagine that the people in that region would like to do is have that material
2432 removed from that site so the site could be used for other purposes. The structures that we have
2433 had and the politics around our long-term solution have not resolved that issue, and so I think that is
2434 a great example of what needs to be resolved, whether that is an interim storage facility that is
2435 enabled and how those aspects are dealt with, is all wrapped up into the Nuclear Waste Policy Act.

2436 Mr. Bentz. Right now, how many different places do we have nuclear waste stored across
2437 the United States?

2438 Dr. Wagner. I don't remember that number. I might defer to Ms. Korsnick on that.

2439 Ms. Korsnick. Yeah. Fifty-some locations. Because the government has never picked up
2440 the used fuel, it is stored at every nuclear site that we have, and you have had to build additional
2441 structures. When I was the site VP at the Ginna Plant in New York, we had to build the first interim
2442 storage for that plant in order to house it.

2443 Mr. Bentz. What cost do you think that adds to your megawatt hour, the storage of this
2444 stuff? Or maybe the better way to put it is the future storage, because it is a long time.

2445 Ms. Korsnick. Yeah. Actually, it is costing the taxpayers, because we have sued the Federal
2446 Government because we had to have this incurred cost, and so now they are having to pay for this at
2447 each of these individual sites. And so --

2448 Mr. Bentz. I went up and visited the Hanford site and saw the vitrification exercise going on
2449 there and the steps they are taking. Is that something that is happening at each one of these
2450 plants?

2451 Ms. Korsnick. So the Hanford site has waste from the Federal Government, and so that is a
2452 different style of waste. The waste at each of the operating nuclear plants is solid fuel and solids
2453 casks, very safely stored.

2454 Mr. Bentz. So recycling is the most likely. But I want to -- I have other -- I want to go to
2455 China for a second.

2456 Ms. Korsnick. Sure. I mean, recycling is a part of an integrated storage solution, but I
2457 would just say it is not going to prevent the need from a deep geologic repository, so it is just a piece.
2458 And I agree with what you were just -- conversation you were just having that I think the Nuclear
2459 Waste Policy Act needs to be sort of refreshed with a look of what is really needed today.

2460 Mr. Bentz. What is France doing? What is France doing? It has got all kinds of nuclear
2461 activity. Does France store all this stuff at each site?

2462 Ms. Korsnick. Well, France is reprocessing, and they are also looking at a deep geologic
2463 repository to house what is left, if you will, after reprocessing.

2464 Mr. Bentz. It seems like we ought to be working with whoever else is struggling with this
2465 same issue.

2466 I will skip over China for a minute and go to Vogtle. For years before I got here, I owned
2467 stock in Southern Company, so I got blessed with a report every year showing how much more it was
2468 going to cost. And so I am just curious why you went with nuclear and not gas years ago. I looked
2469 at the cost. I think it was \$15 billion. When it started it was like \$30 billion or \$37 billion when
2470 you guys got done. So this is a successful plant, as I understand it, because I talked to Congressman
2471 Carter about it -- I am sorry, I listened to Congressman Carter about it a lot, and he is very supportive.

2472 So tell me, why not gas all those years ago, and do you regret the decision?

2473 Mr. Williams. So thanks for your question. And I would say, it was the right decision when
2474 we made it in 2009. It was the right decision to keep going in 2017. We are thrilled to have
2475 2,200 megawatts of baseload energy available for the people of Georgia.

2476 You have to go back. It was a very different time when we started building Vogtle. We
2477 needed baseload generation in our service territory, and natural gas was around \$10 per million BTU.
2478 So the lowest cost option for our customers at that time was to build Vogtle.

2479 Mr. Bentz. And right now -- well, who knows. You can't look back, I guess, without
2480 knowing you could have done it better. Yeah, that is obvious.

2481 I am going to quickly go back to you for China for just a moment. Are we going to ever catch
2482 up when it comes to nuclear? Seriously, with all of this stuff, the burdens nuclear faces here, China
2483 seems to be zooming ahead. Are they much less safe over in China now because of the way they
2484 are doing it?

2485 Ms. Korsnick. Do you love this country? Because I do. And there is no question that we
2486 are going to zoom ahead of China.

2487 Mr. Bentz. Hmm. And, sadly, I can't respond. I have got to yield back. Thank you,
2488 Mr. Chair.

2489 Mr. Latta. The gentleman's time has expired and yields back.

2490 The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania's 13th District for 5 minutes of
2491 questions.

2492 Mr. Joyce. Thank you, Chairman Latta and Ranking Member Castor, for holding this
2493 important hearing, and to our witnesses for this long day and for testifying.

2494 American energy dominance is essential to keeping the United States at the cutting edge of
2495 the new technological and economic advancements. It is a critical component to ensuring that all
2496 Americans -- and yes, I am on that list of those who love America -- that we have access to reliable,
2497 affordable electricity to power our daily lives that increasingly rely on these new technologies.

2498 My home State, the wonderful Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, is well suited to meet this
2499 increased demand. In addition to our wealth of natural resources, like coal and natural gas,
2500 Pennsylvania is in the midst of exciting new developments as we enter another golden age for
2501 nuclear energy.

2502 This Congress, we have done important work to support the development of new energy
2503 projects, including through the establishment of the Energy Dominance Financing Program and the

2504 Working Families Tax Cuts Act. This program recalibrates Department of Energy loan authority
2505 moving away from Green New Deal priorities and towards establishing American energy dominance.

2506 Mr. Williams, in your testimony, you mentioned how support from the DOE Energy
2507 Dominance Financing Program can further lower the cost of projects for customers. Would you
2508 please discuss further how this DOE initiative helps mitigate the effect of new projects on consumer
2509 rates?

2510 Mr. Williams. So thank you for that question. During the Vogtle construction, Georgia
2511 Power, as well as our co-owners, all received loans from the Loan Program Office. This low-cost
2512 capital we were able to use to finance the construction of that over the period of time. Ultimately,
2513 because we were paying less for that cost of capital, those savings passed through to our customers,
2514 and that is how the Loan Program Office can say that hundreds of millions of dollars in savings were
2515 provided to our customers through the loans that were provided to us during the construction of
2516 Vogtle.

2517 RPTR DEAN

2518 EDTR ZAMORA

2519 [2:38 p.m.]

2520 Mr. Joyce. Do you think this program will significantly continue to decrease the cost to the
2521 consumer?

2522 Mr. Williams. We believe that this program is critical for new nuclear development in the
2523 United States to make it more affordable for our customers.

2524 Mr. Joyce. Thank you.

2525 In the great Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Constellation Energy is undertaking an
2526 incredible project to restart a nuclear reactor at the Crane Clean Energy Center. When this plant
2527 comes back online, it will provide a much needed 835 megawatts of baseload power, as well as
2528 creating over 600 new jobs. Recognizing how important this restart is to lower energy costs for
2529 Americans and at the same time strengthening grid reliability, Secretary Wright and the DOE
2530 provided a \$1 billion loan through the Energy Dominance Finance Program.

2531 Ms. Korsnick, how else can Congress support the deployment of nuclear energy projects like
2532 the Crane Clean Energy Center and restart and see at the same time that we can protect the
2533 consumer and protect the taxpayer?

2534 Ms. Korsnick. Thank you. And we really look forward to joining you when Crane Clean
2535 Energy Center comes back online. It was a very well-run plant before it was shut down and it is
2536 going to be even a better running plant when it restarts.

2537 And so, yeah, thank you. Your question is around restarts, but I will broaden it for just other
2538 ways that the government can help as we build these new units. And you heard a couple of times
2539 in the testimony here about how the capital profile is very capital-intensive on the front end of these
2540 projects. And one of the reasons it is so capital-intensive is you have to buy your long lead items up
2541 front because they take several years to construct. So these are like your pressure vessels, your

2542 steam generators. These large components.

2543 And so, you know, one thing I think that we can look at from a government perspective is to
2544 place some of these orders for long lead items so we get the supply chain moving. And then as
2545 these projects need them, if you will, they could buy them back from the government. And I think
2546 that that would be a very strong way of encouraging the supply chain to get moving.

2547 Mr. Joyce. Thank you.

2548 This Congress, in coordination with President Trump, has the opportunity to support a
2549 resurgence in American nuclear energy. This year, I look forward to working with this committee to
2550 build on these positive steps that we have already taken to help lower energy costs and approve
2551 affordability and accessibility for all of Americans.

2552 And again, I will reiterate that we on Energy and Commerce, we do love America. Thank
2553 you.

2554 Mr. Latta. The gentleman's time has expired and yields back.

2555 The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Georgia's First District for 5 minutes of
2556 questions.

2557 Mr. Carter of Georgia. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you all of y'all being here. I
2558 think I am the last one, so you are almost home, you are almost finished.

2559 Ladies and gentlemen, as you heard, I am from the State of Georgia. We are very proud of
2560 the fact that we have built the first two nuclear reactors in the last 30 years at Plant Vogtle, the
2561 largest clean energy plant in the country. We are very, very proud of that. In fact, I will tell you
2562 that in the State of Georgia right now, nuclear energy is providing about 30 percent of our energy
2563 needs in the State right now. And it is anticipated in the next decade, because we have for 12 years
2564 in a row been the number one State in which to do business, it is anticipated that we are probably
2565 going to need about the 9,500 more megawatts of electricity. And that equates to about two
2566 nuclear -- or two plant Vogtles. So we are going to need a lot more electricity in the State of

2567 Georgia as time goes on, and we are preparing for it. And I am very proud, as I say, of my State and
2568 the work that we have done in energy.

2569 One of the reasons why we have been the number one State in which to do business for
2570 12 years in a row is because of the fact that we have had reliable baseload affordable energy, and
2571 certainly that is important.

2572 Mr. Williams, I want to ask you, can you elaborate more about what was learned from
2573 building Vogtle units 3 and 4, and did that project help pave the way for future AP1000 reactors?

2574 Mr. Williams. Thank you, Congressman. And I appreciate your kind words about Plant
2575 Vogtle.

2576 We are -- Vogtle was tremendous in terms of jump-starting this nuclear period that we are in
2577 right now. As we talked earlier, from Vogtle units 3 to 4 we experienced a 20 percent reduction in
2578 cost. We tested and commissioned unit 4 in half the time, and that was based on the application of
2579 lessons learned that we had.

2580 You know, one of the most important lessons that we learned at Vogtle was you don't start
2581 construction until the design is complete, that you make sure that everything is ready to go before
2582 you bring the workforce onsite to begin putting it together. And that was critical learning for us.
2583 We also learned things about the new licensing process that Vogtle was the first to use with part 52.

2584 All of these learnings can be passed on to the next AP1000, which we think would experience
2585 similar cost reductions that we experienced from 3 to 4, but also these learnings apply to other
2586 technologies as well as they look to build their technologies.

2587 Mr. Carter of Georgia. I want to elaborate on two things that you talked about, and that
2588 was, number one, the savings between 3 and 4. There were significant savings in the things that we
2589 learned between the building of reactor No. 3 and reactor No. 4 that resulted in significant savings.
2590 Is that correct?

2591 Mr. Williams. That is correct. We saved approximately 20 percent in costs going from unit

2592 3 to unit 4.

2593 Mr. Carter of Georgia. A couple other things that I want to mention. First of all, I think it is
2594 interesting to note that I have been told, and I don't think it was in confidence, but I think that, you
2595 know, it was made public, that really if we do build more nuclear reactors in the State of Georgia,
2596 they are looking more toward the AP1000s as opposed to the small modular reactors.

2597 Mr. Williams. We believe in the design once, build many approach to nuclear construction.
2598 We have built -- we are currently operating two AP1000s. When we look at the technologies that
2599 are available to us today, we believe that the best option for our customers and the least cost would
2600 be the AP1000, should we choose. And should we mitigate the risk and the barriers that we have
2601 laid out here today, should we mitigate those risks, we believe the AP1000 is the right technology.

2602 Mr. Carter of Georgia. Great. One other thing is that, whereas I obviously appreciate
2603 Southern Company and their commitment to this, the EMCs also were committed to this as well,
2604 Oglethorpe Power and some of the others in the State of Georgia. So it was truly a collaborative
2605 effort and a team effort.

2606 Mr. Williams. That is exactly right, Congressman. There were four owners of that unit
2607 which represents all of the utility customers in Georgia. Obviously, Georgia Power Company with
2608 the largest share, Oglethorpe Power Company, the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia, and the
2609 city of Dalton.

2610 Mr. Carter of Georgia. Good. Last thing, tell me about the Federal involvement. How
2611 was the Federal policies and commitments and guarantees, how important were they?

2612 Mr. Williams. The public-private partnership was critical to building Vogtle. We have
2613 talked about the loan programs and the loans that we received that ultimately saved our customers
2614 hundreds of millions of dollars. Also, the production tax credits that were available for Vogtle are
2615 reducing the cost of those units for our customers today.

2616 Mr. Carter of Georgia. I would be remiss if I did not mention, because I represent Plant

2617 Hatch and they are in my district. And that also makes up part of the 30 percent of the power that
2618 is generated through nuclear power for the State of Georgia.

2619 Again, as you can tell, I am very proud of our State and what we have done, that is why I
2620 waived on to this subcommittee, I am not a member. I am a member of the full committee, but not
2621 this subcommittee. But I wanted to sing our praises in the State of Georgia and what we have done
2622 in nuclear energy. So thank you all for being here. And I will yield back.

2623 Mr. Latta. Thank you very much. The gentleman's time has expired and yields back.

2624 And seeing no further members wishing to ask questions, I think you can see from the -- even
2625 though -- first of all, I want to thank you all for your patience when we had the briefing for about an
2626 hour and a half and for you all staying, that you can see that there is a lot of interest in nuclear power
2627 and what is going on. So we greatly appreciate it. And thank you for being with us today.

2628 Members may have additional questions for you. I remind members that they have 10
2629 business days to submit additional questions for the record. And I ask our witnesses to do their
2630 best to submit those responses within 10 business days upon receipt of the questions.

2631 I ask unanimous consent to insert in the record the documents included on the staff hearing
2632 documents list.

2633 And without objection, so ordered.

2634 And without objection, the subcommittee is adjourned.

2635 [The information follows:]

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2637 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

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[Whereupon, at 2:48 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

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