UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

August 20, 2026

The Honorable Bob Latta
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Latta:

On April 22, 2026, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission appeared before the House Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Energy at a hearing entitled, “Nuclear Regulatory Commission: Oversight of Activities, Priorities, and Fiscal Year 2027 Budget”

From that hearing, members forwarded questions for the hearing record. One set was directed to Chairman Nieh (on behalf of the Commission), while Commissioners Wright, Crowell, Marzano, and Weaver each received their own set of questions. The responses to the questions for the hearing record are enclosed.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Eugene Dacus, Director Office
of Congressional Affairs

Enclosures:
As stated

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable Bob Latta
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kathy Castor
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of
Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Energy
Hearing Entitled, *"Nuclear Regulatory Commission: Oversight of Activities, Priorities, and Fiscal Year 2027 Budget"*
April 22, 2026
Questions for the Record for Chairman Ho Nieh

The Honorable Bob Latta (R-OH)

1. **While safety is your primary responsibility, would you all agree that NRC should operate efficiently and effectively in a way that enables deployment of nuclear technology for the benefit of society?**

   Yes. While safety continues to be the top priority for the agency, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)'s mission statement, which was recently revised in accordance with Congress's direction in the ADVANCE Act, reflects the importance of operating efficiently and effectively to enable the safe deployment of nuclear technologies for the benefit of society. Safety and efficiency are not mutually exclusive. As an enabling regulator, we are focusing our resources on the issues that matter most to safety. That is the primary emphasis in our implementation of the ADVANCE Act and Executive Orders, including the wholesale revisions to our regulations. In the regulatory context, enabling is aligning our regulations with actual risks, adapting our frameworks to new technologies and adding regulatory flexibility where safety is maintained.

   a. **Is NRC making measurable progress towards this goal?**

      Yes, the NRC is making measurable progress in operating more efficiently and effectively to enable the deployment of nuclear technology. Recent initiatives and achievements include:

      - **Organizational Improvements:** The NRC has reorganized to enhance efficiency, strengthen decision-making and prepare for increased licensing activity.
      - **Timely Licensing Actions:** The NRC has accelerated reviews and reduced costs, including:
        - Completing the TerraPower Kemmerer Unit 1 construction permit safety review—the first commercial non-light-water reactor in over 50 years—nine months ahead of schedule and 11% (~$3 million) under budget.
        - Completing the fastest-ever license renewal at the Robinson plant, completed in under 12 months, saving approximately $787,000 compared to the average subsequent license renewals in 2025.
        - Issuing TRISO-X, LLC, a 40-year license for a first-of-a-kind HALEU fuel fabrication facility, 3.5 months ahead of schedule and saving $1.5 million.

    - Reducing Long Mott review schedule by 9 months and lowering resource estimates by approximately $1.2 million.
- **Regulatory Implementation:** The NRC has completed 31 of 36 actions identified in response to the ADVANCE Act and 7 of 27 rulemakings initiated to implement Executive Order (EO) 14300.
- **Modernized Milestones:** The NRC has updated its Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (NEIMA) milestone schedules for final safety evaluations to align with EO 14300's 12- and 18-month timelines.

2. **Concerns have been raised that NRC is losing its independence and this is undermining safety. Given what you've seen since you've been Chairman, do you believe you have the authority to make independent decisions?**

   The NRC continues to exercise its statutory authority as a collegial decision-making body to make its fact-based safety decisions.

   a. **Do you and your staff believe you are responsible and accountable for decisions and that safety is not at risk?**

      Yes. Safety is our core mission and number one priority. We own that responsibility and remain accountable to the American people in protecting public health and safety.

3. **Let me turn to workforce. By some estimates, NRC has four hundred fewer staff now than at the beginning of this Administration. The NRC budget proposal indicates over a hundred fewer staff than last year in the nuclear safety program. How does the Commission plan to address the human capital challenges it faces so that resource constraints do not inhibit or delay NRC licensing reviews?**

   The NRC is sufficiently staffed to continue to meet its important safety and security mission. To prepare for anticipated workload growth and expected attrition, the NRC is recruiting new staff, using a targeted, data-driven approach, to maintain sufficient staffing to enable the safe use and deployment of nuclear technologies. The hiring and compensation authorities provided by the ADVANCE Act will enhance the agency's ability to attract and hire qualified new talent who may otherwise pursue private-sector opportunities. The agency plans to focus on recruiting for critical skills and retaining top performers in key disciplines where data shows this is needed to ensure continued mission success.

   The NRC is using additional hiring flexibilities such as direct hire authority, to efficiently post and fill vacancies for critical needs. Use of these flexibilities is expected to decrease the time to hire for internal and external hiring actions. With the agency's reorganization finalized, the NRC is identifying the specific staffing needs. In addition, the NRC is focusing on early career hiring. The agency annually recruits for a Nuclear Regulatory Apprenticeship Network (NRAN) class, consistent

with the ADVANCE Act, and recently increased the NRAN class size to strengthen the talent pipeline and support long-term workforce sustainability. The NRC is recruiting for an FY 2027 NRAN cohort of at least 25 highly qualified hires to keep the agency's talent pipeline flowing. The agency anticipates that the use of these recruitment tools will increase hiring, helping the agency to meet its hiring goals in FY 2027.

a. **How many staff leave on their own, and to more lucrative jobs in industry?**

The NRC does not collect data on whether staff who leave the agency obtain more lucrative positions in industry, as departing staff are not required to disclose their future employment or compensation. While we do not have comprehensive data on post-NRC employment, exit surveys indicate that higher compensation is a factor for some staff who resign, though not all departing employees choose to provide this information or to participate in an exit survey.

4. **Will the Commission work with the Committee to identify practical, targeted Atomic Energy Act reforms, such as the REFUEL Act, that seek to make licensing of recycling fuel more predictable and efficient?**

Yes, the Commission will work with Congress and the White House on Atomic Energy Act reforms that seek to make licensing requirements more predictable and efficient.

5. **For many years, the NRC successfully used a narrowly tailored risk-informed approach to in-situ recovery (ISR) regulation using a combination of existing regulations and site-specific license conditions. Despite this, in 2020 NRC staff was considering a rulemaking that would go far beyond the existing approach that has been safely used for decades. My concern is that the Biden-era draft ISR rule, especially regarding groundwater post-restoration monitoring at uranium ISR sites, would increase monitoring and compliance costs despite decades of evidence showing the ISR operations pose extremely low risk. Will the Commission ensure that the NRC's ISR rule aligns with President Trump's EO 14300, by taking what the President describes as a "risk-informed, narrowly tailored approach," rather than a very broad measure that increases costs?**

Yes, the NRC's in situ recovery (ISR) rulemaking is being revised to align with EO 14300 by developing risk-informed revisions to 10 CFR Part 40 to establish groundwater protection requirements specific to ISR operations. This rulemaking would amend the NRC's regulations to codify risk-informed groundwater protection standards for ISR facilities, including post-restoration monitoring periods, and to risk-inform decommissioning timeliness regulations while increasing licensing flexibility to allow site-specific extensions for both reactors and materials facilities.

6. **Recently the NRC made major changes to its Reactor Oversight Process (ROP). They are thoughtful and risk-informed, but so far they are just written procedures. Now that it's time to implement the new ROP procedures, how are you ensuring inspectors are consistent and will stay consistent across the fleet?**

   Our primary method of ensuring consistent risk-informed inspector performance across the NRC Regions is requiring the inspectors to become qualified and to participate in periodic refresher training. In addition, when there are significant changes to the ROP, or its associated guidance documents, NRC inspectors are required to take training on the changes. The NRC's recent reorganization also helps ensure consistency by establishing the Office of the Chief Nuclear Reactor Inspector (CNRI), which now encompasses the operating reactor oversight program, enforcement and allegation program, and investigation functions of all four Regions. The headquarters' Office of CNRI is led by a central senior executive (the Chief Nuclear Reactor Inspector) who helps to ensure agency-wide alignment with clear, long-term direction for the program and consistent application of that direction. We will be closely measuring the resources being expended by inspectors to further drive consistency in the implementation of the newly developed procedures.

   a. **In the past we've heard about a ratcheting up of requirements based on inspections, which is why the NRC needed to re-baseline. How will you ensure that doesn't happen again?**

      The concern you raise is a leadership issue. Preventing the reoccurrence of this is a current leadership priority for the NRC. We are addressing this through our new management model, which emphasizes clear expectations, accountability and continuous improvement. NRC leaders are reinforcing risk-informed regulation and the distinction between requirements and guidance, ensuring staff follow established processes, and encouraging open feedback. These steps help maintain stability and predictability in our oversight, in line with our Principles of Good Regulation.

7. **The FY 2027 budget request looks like a good news story: The topline request is down 8% from FY 2026. The Operating Reactor Business line is down 9%. The appropriated dollars decrease almost 11%. The appropriated dollars support advanced reactors more than the operating fleet. The NRC has taken steps to reduce operating reactor inspection hours by almost 40%, and licensing timelines have been shortened drastically, which is great progress. But the budget request for the operating reactor oversight product line is only down 6.5%, and the annual fee also decreases by 6.5%. With all the efficiencies in licensing and oversight, why aren't the fees for operating reactors coming down commensurate with the projected savings?**

   While the FY 2027 budget request forecasts a 6.5 percent reduction in the annual fee for operating power reactors, this does not match one-for-one the 9 percent reduction in the Operating Reactors Business Line for several reasons. First, budgeted resources for

the Operating Reactors Business Line are allocated to not only the Operating Power Reactors Fee Class but also to the Non-Power Production or Utilization Facilities Fee Class. Additionally, the indirect portion of a business line (e.g., training, travel, mission support, and supervisors), as well as corporate support and inspector general budgetary resources (agency support costs), are distributed among the fee classes.

The nearly 40 percent reduction in baseline inspection hours for operating reactors reflects efficiencies and a corresponding decrease in resource needs within the inspection program. However, the NRC must still maintain essential functions to ensure continued safety and security and fulfill its regulatory and statutory oversight role. For example, the NRC continues to require two resident inspectors at every site and relies on engineering, health physics, physical security and emergency preparedness specialists to inspect the ROP cornerstones. These ongoing activities, along with the allocation of shared indirect and agency support costs, mean that the reduction in annual fees, while significant, is not directly proportional to the decrease in inspection hours.

The NRC remains committed to exploring further efficiencies and opportunities to reduce the fee burden on the operating fleet.

a. **Is the operating fleet carrying the cost of transforming the NRC and streamlining licensing for new and advanced reactors? Why not ask for more appropriated dollars?**

   No, the operating power reactors fee class does not carry all of these costs. Some of the costs associated with transforming the NRC are allocated to other fee classes because the activities do not exclusively benefit the Operating Power Reactors Fee Class but also benefit other fee classes. Other costs are not borne by the operating fleet because they are classified as excluded activities from fee recovery, such as advanced reactor regulatory infrastructure activities, and are funded through appropriated dollars. While the Operating Power Reactors Fee Class does include some of these costs, such as licensing for new and advanced reactors, the NRC has sought to limit the impact on fees by ensuring that the FY 2027 budget request reflects only those new and advanced reactor applications that the agency has a high degree of confidence will be submitted or on hand in FY 2027. In addition, the ADVANCE Act of 2024 (Section 201) further limits the impact of advanced reactor licensing activities on the operating fleet. The reduced hourly rate for application and pre-application licensing work for advanced reactors excludes mission-indirect program support and agency support costs. Without this exclusion, the reduced hourly rate would redistribute fee burden back onto the existing fleet, but excluding mission-indirect program support and agency costs limits this redistribution. This exclusion further isolates transformation and streamlining costs from the operating power reactor fee class.

With respect to appropriated funds, the NRC's FY 2027 budget request is based on thorough assessment of resources needed to support both ongoing regulatory responsibilities and agency transformation. The agency's request is sufficient to meet these needs and would be funded under the current fee recovery structure established by NEIMA.

b. **When will operating reactors start to see savings from the transformation?**

The NRC's FY 2027 budget request forecasts a 6.5 percent reduction in the annual fee for operating power reactors, and the NRC continues to explore ways to further reduce the fee burden on the operating fleet. For example, additional savings from the changes to the ROP baseline inspection program are anticipated to result in lower service fees for the operating fleet compared to the service fees previously assessed for oversight. Additional savings could accrue to operating reactors in FY 2028 if licensees voluntarily adopt risk-informed initiatives approved as final rules by the Commission.

c. **Is there anything Congress can do to correct the imbalance?**

The amount of the NRC's annual budgeted appropriation to be recovered by fees is established by NEIMA. Generally, the NRC must collect its net budget authority through fees to the maximum extent practicable with the exception of some excluded activities, which are covered by the appropriation. Under the current statutory framework, NRC's fee process is designed to allocate costs in accordance with NEIMA's requirements.

The Honorable Marinette Miller-Meeks (R-IA)

1. **The 2024 memorandum of cooperation with Canada and the UK on advanced reactors and SMRs shows how regulators can work together internationally. How do you balance maintaining the NRC's independent safety mission with supporting U.S. technological excellence and our broader foreign policy goals?**

The NRC's collaboration with other national regulators does not compromise our safety mission or our sovereign decision-making authority. International cooperation supports efficient safety decision-making by engaging with trusted regulatory partners to collectively review technical topics, thereby reducing redundant efforts across individual countries.

Advancing the safe deployment of U.S. reactor technology abroad is a key tenet of the Administration's civil nuclear policy objectives. The NRC is committed to engaging with international regulatory partners to advance this and U.S. foreign policy goals, both to support U.S. industry's prominence in the global nuclear marketplace and to counter the influence of adversary suppliers such as China and Russia. As multiple countries consider the same U.S.-origin reactor designs, focused collaboration among regulators on design review and licensing will save time and resources in the review process.

2. **I understand you were recently at an IAEA meeting in Europe. What was that about and what did you hear about how other nation's view NRC regulatory reforms?**

   In April 2026, I led the United States Delegation to the Tenth Review Meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) in Vienna, Austria. The CNS is a legally-binding international treaty, created after the Chernobyl accident, through which participating countries conduct peer reviews of one another's nuclear safety programs.

   During the meeting, the U.S. delegation presented on how it meets the CNS and discussed ongoing regulatory reform efforts driven by the ADVANCE Act and Executive Order 14300. There was significant interest from our counterparts in the reform work we are undertaking in the United States. Our reform efforts may influence regulatory approaches around the world since many other countries are also demanding similar reforms.

   a. **NRC recently issued its Part 53 rulemaking and will soon issue a proposed framework for licensing micro reactors. How do these flexible licensing approaches compare with other nations and does NRC work help improve how those nation's license new reactors?**

      The NRC's international counterparts viewed our new Part 53 rule, which is technology inclusive, and proposed Part 57 rule, which covers micro reactors, with great interest and expressed a desire to remain apprised of our progress once we receive and begin processing the first applications under these new frameworks.

      As in the United States, other countries that already have nuclear power programs are similarly working to update their existing regulations (which were written to cover the prevailing technologies available at the time – large light-water reactors) to efficiently license new technologies including SMRs and micro reactors. As we undergo this period of significant reform, the NRC can serve as a model to those countries by sharing what we are learning in our own modernization journey. In countries considering nuclear power for the first time, their regulators are developing frameworks that contemplate a broad variety of technologies. For those countries, the NRC's experience is beneficial both as an experienced regulator and as we deploy new, flexible regulatory models. As we engage with our international regulatory counterparts, regardless of their level of expertise, we seek to share the lessons we have learned over five decades, including what has worked effectively and what we have needed to improve.

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ)

1. **Last year, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse and I sent you a letter concerning a contract the NRC issued in August 2025 without a competitive bidding process. One of the deliverables from that contract was a white paper on the legal and regulatory history of the prohibition on NRC promoting nuclear technologies. In the spirit of transparency that you agreed at our hearing is so vital to nuclear regulation, the white paper must be made public. Will you commit to making that paper public in your responses to these questions for the record, and sharing it with your fellow commissioners?**

   The NRC does not plan to make the paper publicly available because it is a deliberative document that contains attorney-client privileged information.

The Honorable Diana DeGette (D-CO)

1. **Last Congress, former Energy Subcommittee Chairman Jeff Duncan and I passed the bipartisan ADVANCE Act to accelerate the deployment and licensing of nuclear energy. One of the provisions I authored was designed to enhance the ability of the NRC to attract and retain expert and experienced staff.**

   a. **Do you believe it is important to the future success of the American nuclear industry that the NRC be able to attract and retain the best talent possible?**

      Yes, it is vital that the NRC attracts and retains the best talent possible. The NRC's greatest asset is its knowledgeable and experienced staff. The Commission is taking action to ensure that it can recruit and retain talented individuals to maintain and grow its capacity to enable the safe use of nuclear technologies. For example, the Commission recently announced a 10% special act award to eligible staff in recognition of the exemplary work that the staff has performed in the past year to support national energy priorities. The award also was an intentional investment in the agency's workforce at a time of heightened demand for their collective expertise.

   b. **The NRC lost over 330 staff members last year, more than 10% of its staff, is the NRC sufficiently staffed?**

      Yes, the NRC is sufficiently staffed to continue to meet its important safety and security mission. Through reform efforts taken in response to the ADVANCE Act of 2024 and EO 14300, such as the NRC reorganization, wholesale review of regulations, improved licensing timelines from increased efficiencies, and re-baselining the Reactor Oversight Process, the NRC has effectively managed the staff losses without compromising its mission. To prepare for an anticipated workload increase and expected

attrition, the NRC is recruiting new staff, including entry-level hires, to maintain sufficient staffing and provide long-term sustainability to enable the safe use and deployment of nuclear technologies. The NRC is annually recruiting for a NRAN class, consistent with the ADVANCE Act, and recently increased the NRAN class size.

2. **I understand that the NRC, in implementing the ADVANCE Act, is aiming to reduce by 15% the number of staff hours involved in processing license changes, thereby increasing nuclear safety but at the same time speeding up federal permitting and making the federal agency more responsive and efficient. How are you monitoring this goal and do you see further progress in timely reviews?**

   The NRC is committed to meeting the goals of the ADVANCE Act and EO 14300 by delivering timely, predictable and efficient licensing reviews while maintaining our focus on safety. We are tracking our progress through clear performance indicators and a revised management model to drive agency alignment. We have implemented process improvements—such as risk-informed reviews, better project planning, and enhanced data analytics—to reduce staff hours and review times.

   Since passage of the ADVANCE Act, approximately 94 percent of operating reactor licensing reviews have been completed on schedule or ahead of schedule, while project estimates have been reduced by roughly 40 percent for review schedules and 35 percent for staff hours, all while continuing to meet the NRC's high safety standards. As we gain more experience with advanced reactors, we expect even greater efficiency. Since 2020, the NRC has completed six advanced reactor design reviews under budget and on or ahead of schedule. Reviews initiated since 2025 have been completed or are on track to be completed within the new 18-month timeframe established by EO 14300.

   We are also reviewing our regulations, setting fixed fee caps, and aligning our schedules with statutory deadlines to further improve predictability and transparency.

The Honorable Jennifer McCellan (D-VA)

1. **In recent years, we have seen an increased number of cybersecurity threats to energy infrastructure. How do the recent changes to NRC's Reactor Oversight Process and security inspection protocols impact cybersecurity oversight, and how is NRC working to ensure that its cybersecurity inspection protocols are robust enough to ensure that our nation's nuclear power plants are following best practices and prepared to withstand targeted cyber-attacks from malign actors?**

   The recent changes to the ROP have further risk-informed cybersecurity oversight. The cybersecurity protections currently in place across the nuclear power fleet are designed to provide robust defense against both current and emerging cyber threats. The NRC maintains continuous situational awareness by monitoring threat information from the U.S. Intelligence Community and other federal partners. When the NRC sees signs of new or changing threats, it evaluates whether updates to its rules, guidance, or oversight approach are warranted to ensure that cybersecurity measures remain effective.

House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Energy
Hearing Entitled, *"Nuclear Regulatory Commission: Oversight of Activities, Priorities, and Fiscal Year 2027 Budget"*
April 22, 2026
Questions for the Record for Commissioner David Wright

The Honorable Bob Latta (R-OH)

1. **While safety is your primary responsibility, would you all agree that NRC should operate efficiently and effectively in a way that enables deployment of nuclear technology for the benefit of society?**

   Response:
   Yes. While safety continues to be the top priority for the agency, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)'s mission statement, which was recently revised in accordance with Congress's direction in the ADVANCE Act, reflects the importance of operating efficiently and effectively to enable the safe deployment of nuclear technologies for the benefit of society. Safety and efficiency are not mutually exclusive. As an enabling regulator, we are focusing our resources on the issues that matter most to safety. That is the primary emphasis in our implementation of the ADVANCE Act and Executive Orders, including the wholesale revisions to our regulations. In the regulatory context, enabling is aligning our regulations with actual risks, adapting our frameworks to new technologies and adding regulatory flexibility where safety is maintained.

   a. Is NRC making measurable progress towards this goal?

      Response:
      Yes, the NRC is making measurable progress in operating more efficiently and effectively to enable the deployment of nuclear technology. Recent initiatives and achievements include:

      - **Organizational Improvements:** The NRC has reorganized to enhance efficiency, strengthen decision-making and prepare for increased licensing activity.
      - **Timely Licensing Actions:** The NRC has accelerated reviews and reduced costs, including:
        - Completing the TerraPower Kemmerer Unit 1 construction permit safety review—the first commercial non-light-water reactor in over 50 years—nine months ahead of schedule and 11% (~$3 million) under budget.
        - Completing the fastest-ever license renewal at the Robinson plant, completed in under 12 months, saving approximately $787,000 compared to the average subsequent license renewals in 2025.
        - Issuing TRISO-X, LLC, a 40-year license for a first-of-a-kind HALEU fuel fabrication facility, 3.5 months ahead of schedule and saving $1.5 million.
        - Reducing Long Mott review schedule by 9 months and lowering resource estimates by approximately $1.2 million.
      - **Regulatory Implementation:** The NRC has completed 31 of 36 actions identified in response to the ADVANCE Act and 7 of 27 rulemakings initiated to implement Executive Order (EO) 14300.

Modernized Milestones: The NRC has updated its Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (NEIMA) milestone schedules for final safety evaluations to align with EO 14300's 12- and 18-month timelines.

2. **Let me turn to workforce. By some estimates, NRC has four hundred fewer staff now than at the beginning of this Administration.**

   The NRC budget proposal indicates over a hundred fewer staff than last year in the nuclear safety program.

   How many staff leave on their own, and to more lucrative jobs in industry?

   Response:
   The NRC does not collect data on whether staff who leave the agency obtain more lucrative positions in industry, as departing staff are not required to disclose their future employment or compensation. While we do not have comprehensive data on post-NRC employment, exit surveys indicate that higher compensation is a factor for some staff who resign, though not all departing employees choose to provide this information or to participate in an exit survey.

3. **Will the Commission work with Committee to identify practical, targeted Atomic Energy Act reforms, such as the REFUEL Act, that seek to make licensing of recycling fuel more predictable and efficient?**

   Response:
   Yes, the Commission will work with Congress and the White House on Atomic Energy Act reforms that seek to make licensing requirements more predictable and efficient.

House Energy and Commerce Committee, Subcommittee on Energy
Hearing Entitled, "Nuclear Regulatory Commission: Oversight of Activities, Priorities, and Fiscal Year 2027 Budget"
Questions for the Record from Commissioner Bradley R. Crowell

The Honorable Bob Latta (R-OH)

1. While safety is your primary responsibility, would you all agree that NRC should operate efficiently and effectively in a way that enables deployment of nuclear technology for the benefit of society?

RESPONSE: Yes, predicated on safety and security remaining the top priorities.

a. Is NRC making measurable progress towards this goal?

RESPONSE: Yes.

2. Let me turn to workforce. By some estimates, NRC has four hundred fewer staff now than at the beginning of this Administration.

The NRC budget proposal indicates over a hundred fewer staff than last year in the nuclear safety program.

How many staff leave on their own, and to more lucrative jobs in industry?

RESPONSE: As the Chairman articulated in his response, the NRC does not collect data on whether staff who leave the agency obtain more lucrative positions in industry, as departing staff are not required to disclose the specifics of their future employment or compensation. However, while the NRC does not collect comprehensive data on post-NRC employment for staff who leave the agency, voluntary exit survey data indicates that higher compensation and more workplace flexibility (i.e. telework) are the most prevalent responses given by departing staff, though not all departing employees choose to provide this information or to participate in an exit survey.

3. Will the Commission work with Committee to identify practical, targeted Atomic Energy Act reforms, such as the REFUEL Act, that seek to make licensing of recycling fuel more predictable and efficient?

RESPONSE: Yes, in accordance with established protocols for all executive branch agencies engaging with Congress on policy or budget-related matters.

House of Representative Committee on Energy and Commerce

Hearing Entitled, "*Nuclear Regulatory Commission: Oversight of Activities Priorities, and Fiscal Year 2027 Budget*"

April 22, 2026

Questions for the Record for Commissioner Marzano

The Honorable Bob Latta (R-OH)

1. **While safety is your primary responsibility, would you all agree that NRC should operate efficiently and effectively in a way that enables deployment of nuclear technology for the benefit of society?**

   Yes.

   a. **Is NRC making measurable progress towards this goal?**

      Yes. The NRC has made measurable progress through a number of initiatives. Much of this progress has been driven by efforts to scrutinize and streamline our processes and reduce redundancies. We are also working to evolve agency culture and staff behavior to promote efficiency and openness in accordance with the updated mission statement and our organizational values. For example, recent guidance clarifying how staff communicate with stakeholders has led to more timely and transparent interactions. Stakeholders report this has greatly improved the regulatory process.

2. **Let me turn to workforce. By some estimates, NRC has four hundred fewer staff now than at the beginning of this Administration. The NRC budget proposal indicates over a hundred fewer staff than last year in the nuclear safety program. How many staff leave on their own, and to more lucrative jobs in industry?**

   The NRC does not collect data on whether staff who leave the agency obtain more lucrative positions in industry, as departing staff are not required to disclose their future employment or compensation. Therefore, it is difficult to provide a definitive quantitative measure of how many staff departures can be attributed to finding more lucrative industry jobs. However, I can say through direct observation that many staff are taking new positions in industry, which generally offer higher compensation packages. I also find that even though recent staff departures are documented as retirements, that does not mean that these individuals are leaving the nuclear workforce.

   While we do not have comprehensive data on post-NRC employment, exit surveys indicate that higher compensation is a factor for some staff who resign. Based on my understanding of exit survey data, approximately 60% of respondents stated that issues related to work-life balance and work schedule flexibility, to include telework policy, influenced their decisions to leave the agency. Although staff have expressed concerns over certain aspects of recent policy decisions at the NRC, this does not appear to be a major factor in staff departures in my view**.**

3. **Will the Commission work with Committee to identify practical, targeted Atomic Energy Act reforms, such as the REFUEL Act, that seek to make licensing of recycling fuel more predictable and efficient?**

   Yes, we will work with Congress and the White House to identify practical reforms.

<u>The Honorable Diana DeGette (D-CO)</u>

1. **Can you detail the importance of the tools that Congress granted the NRC in attracting and retaining highly competent professional staff?**

   I am a strong proponent of the ADVANCE Act's hiring and compensation authorities. These authorities and resources are essential for sustaining the NRC's tradition of technical excellence and regulatory leadership. I continue to encourage management and supervisors to fully utilize the hiring and retention tools provided under the ADVANCE Act to attract and retain highly qualified staff. Leveraging these flexibilities is essential to ensuring we have the expertise needed to fulfill the NRC's mission both now and in the future.

   However, based on my recent experience as a member of the Commission, I find the agency to be in a similar situation to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) around twenty-five years ago. In response to high staff turnover at the SEC, Congress enacted pay parity legislation (through the Investors and Capital Markets Fee Relief Act, P.L. 107-123) to exempt SEC staff from the standard general schedule civil service pay rules. Although the NRC has somewhat similar authority under Section 161d of the Atomic Energy Act, there are additional restrictions that have limited the Commission's ability to provide pay parity, especially among the senior executive service.

2. **Given that the NRC lost over 330 staff members last year, more than 10% of its staff, is the NRC sufficiently staffed?**

   Staff attrition remains a great concern of mine. While staffing remains adequate to fulfill our critical mission functions and ongoing licensing and oversight activity, the agency has temporarily deferred lower-priority tasks. This adjustment allows us to allocate resources to higher-priority areas and effectively manage the current workload. Additionally, the efficiencies implemented under the ADVANCE Act combined with efforts underway in response to EO 14300, have enabled the NRC to meet our mission despite the recent high rate of attrition. While these measures have helped, they are not sufficient to sustain our present workload over the long-term, much less address the unprecedented demands from future licensing and oversight.

   Therefore, we must continue hiring at a rate that offsets ongoing attrition and ensures long-term workforce stability. Even without projected increases in workload, maintaining our current level of activity will necessitate regular hiring to replace departing staff and preserve institutional knowledge. For these reasons, I strongly encourage senior management to proactively anticipate future needs and gaps, and to fully leverage the hiring tools provided by the ADVANCE Act to ensure we continue to fulfill our mission effectively.

In addition, to further enhance the agency's adaptability and responsiveness to workload changes, the NRC is developing a comprehensive strategic workforce planning process, which uses an enterprise-wide tool known as NEXUS that integrates a number of workload and workflow tracking tools with the agency's human capital systems. The tool will enable the agency to capture both current and future talent needs in a systematic way to ensure that the talent and expertise required to execute our mission is available today and in the future. This process is expected to support the Agency in assessing workforce gaps and future staffing needs by empowering agency leaders to make better planning decisions and inform hiring, recruitment, and talent management. As part of this effort, the agency is developing a staff expertise database to help management quickly identify and deploy technical experts where needed based on the current workforce.

3. **Has the NRC taken sufficient advantage of the provisions in the ADVANCE Act to hire new staff or grant performance bonuses to help retain existing staff?**

The agency issued ADVANCE Act awards earlier this year to formally recognize exceptional staff performance in enabling the safe deployment of nuclear technology and improving licensing or regulatory oversight programs. Eighteen individuals were selected as the inaugural recipients of this prestigious award, marking an important milestone in acknowledging their outstanding contributions to the NRC's mission. This also demonstrates how the ADVANCE Act is driving practical, meaningful improvements for staff.

However, I do believe that the agency can improve its utilization of the hiring and compensation authorities under the ADVANCE Act, to include the use of term-limited positions. As the agency's workload grows, it is my expectation for staff to proactively identify opportunities to leverage the ADVANCE Act to fill critical needs.

House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Energy
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Additional Questions for the Record for Commissioner Weaver

The Honorable Bob Latta (R-OH)

1. **While safety is your primary responsibility, would you all agree that NRC should operate efficiently and effectively in a way that enables deployment of nuclear technology for the benefit of society?**

   Yes. While safety continues to be the top priority for the agency, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)'s mission statement, which was recently revised in accordance with Congress's direction in the ADVANCE Act, reflects the importance of operating efficiently and effectively to enable the safe deployment of nuclear technologies for the benefit of society. Safety and efficiency are not mutually exclusive. As an enabling regulator, we are focusing our resources on the issues that matter most to safety. That is the primary emphasis in our implementation of the ADVANCE Act and Executive Orders, including the wholesale revisions to our regulations. In the regulatory context, enabling is aligning our regulations with actual risks, adapting our frameworks to new technologies and adding regulatory flexibility where safety is maintained.

   a. **Is NRC making measurable progress towards this goal?**

      Yes, the NRC is making measurable progress in operating more efficiently and effectively to enable the deployment of nuclear technology. Recent initiatives and achievements include:

      - **Organizational Improvements:** The NRC has reorganized to enhance efficiency, strengthen decision-making and prepare for increased licensing activity.
      - **Timely Licensing Actions:** The NRC has accelerated reviews and reduced costs, including:
        - Completing the TerraPower Kemmerer Unit 1 construction permit safety review—the first commercial non-light-water reactor in over 50 years—nine months ahead of schedule and 11% (~$3 million) under budget.
        - Completing the fastest-ever license renewal at the Robinson plant, completed in under 12 months, saving approximately $787,000 compared to the average subsequent license renewals in 2025.
        - Issuing TRISO-X, LLC, a 40-year license for a first-of-a-kind HALEU fuel fabrication facility, 3.5 months ahead of schedule and saving $1.5 million.
        - Reducing Long Mott review schedule by 9 months and lowering resource

estimates by approximately $1.2 million.

- **Regulatory Implementation:** The NRC has completed 31 of 36 actions identified in response to the ADVANCE Act and 7 of 27 rulemakings initiated to implement Executive Order (EO) 14300.
- **Modernized Milestones:** The NRC has updated its Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (NEIMA) milestone schedules for final safety evaluations to align with EO 14300's 12- and 18-month timelines.

2. **Let me turn to workforce. By some estimates, NRC has four hundred fewer staff now than at the beginning of this Administration. The NRC budget proposal indicates over a hundred fewer staff than last year in the nuclear safety program. How many staff leave on their own, and to more lucrative jobs in industry?**

   The NRC does not collect data on whether staff who leave the agency obtain more lucrative positions in industry, as departing staff are not required to disclose their future employment or compensation. While we do not have comprehensive data on post-NRC employment, exit surveys indicate that higher compensation is a factor for some staff who resign, though not all departing employees choose to provide this information or to participate in an exit survey.

3. **Will the Commission work with the Committee to identify practical, targeted Atomic Energy Act reforms, such as the REFUEL Act, that seek to make licensing of recycling fuel more predictable and efficient?**

   Yes, the Commission will work with Congress and the White House on Atomic Energy Act reforms that seek to make licensing requirements more predictable and efficient.