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CHAIRMAN

FRANK PALLONE, JR., NEW JERSEY
RANKING MEMBER

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
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June 16, 2026

The Honorable Ho K. Nieh
Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Mail Stop O-16 B33
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Dear Chairman Nieh:

Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Energy on Wednesday, April 22, 2026, to testify at the hearing entitled "Nuclear Regulatory Commission: Oversight of Activities, Priorities, and Fiscal Year 2027 Budget."

Pursuant to the Rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the hearing record remains open for ten business days to permit Members to submit additional questions for the record, which are attached. The format of your responses to these questions should be as follows: (1) the name of the Member whose question you are addressing, (2) the complete text of the question you are addressing in bold, and (3) your answer to that question in plain text.

To facilitate the printing of the hearing record, please respond to these questions with a transmittal letter by the close of business on Wednesday, July 1, 2026. Your responses should be mailed to Seth Ricketts Legislative Clerk, Committee on Energy and Commerce, 2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 and e-mailed to Seth.Ricketts@mail.house.gov.

Thank you again for your time and effort preparing and delivering testimony before the Subcommittee.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Latta
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy

cc: Kathy Castor, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy

Attachment

Additional Questions for the Record

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?

    a. Is NRC making measurable progress towards this goal?

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?

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

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?

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

4. 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?

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?

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?

   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?

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?

   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?

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

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

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?

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?

   d. 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 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 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?

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

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 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?