

**Chairman Robert Latta**  
**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery**  
**Subcommittee on Energy Hearing**  
**“Nuclear Permitting Reform: Legislation to Advance**  
**Efficient Licensing”**  
**Tuesday, June 9, 2026**

Today’s hearing will consider legislative proposals to improve the Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s licensing process among other reforms, which will help maintain momentum for U.S. nuclear development.

A robust and growing American nuclear industry is vital for our economy, energy and national security.

We need firm, reliable energy, and a lot more of it.

We also need a robust nuclear sector for our national security: we must increase nuclear commerce with our allies and provide a more cost-effective industrial base.

This subcommittee has already taken significant steps that will optimize the regulatory system and related policies to assist nuclear deployment and the economic and security benefits for the nation.

Our bipartisan work two years ago led to the ADVANCE Act. This law directed the NRC to align its mission for enabling benefits of nuclear technology and to focus on efficiency, reducing costs, and increasing predictability in the permitting process.

Our work also laid the foundation for a revitalized domestic nuclear fuel sector. The Nuclear Fuel Security Act and Prohibiting Russian Uranium Imports Act, which many of us on this dias helped develop and sponsor, provided federal support and market incentives to grow our nuclear fuel industry and eliminate Russia's strategic chokehold over global fuel supplies.

As these important laws have been implemented, it has become clear that additional updates may be helpful to achieve their goals.

The bills under consideration this morning provide additional, practical reforms, so the permitting process can be more efficient, while safety is protected and transparency for the public is assured.

We will consider the bipartisan H.R. 5549, the Efficient Nuclear Licensing Hearings Act, sponsored by my colleagues from Virginia's ninth, Washington's eighth, and Texas's thirty-third congressional districts. This would save time and resources by eliminating an outdated requirement that NRC hold a final public hearing on a license, even if no one requests the hearing.

H.R. 3978, the Nuclear REFUEL Act, which I led along with my colleague from California's fiftieth district, would clarify certain recycling facilities may be licensed under the same regulatory framework as other fuel cycle facilities.

Recently, several of us visited a fuel recycling facility in northern France to have a better sense of the potential for this

technology in the United States. This legislation will result in efficient permitting changes to extract additional energy out of used fuel.

H.R. 9084, the Department of Energy Nuclear Transparency Act, introduced last week by the Ranking Member of the Energy Subcommittee, would require DOE to announce and post licensing decisions for facilities it permits, similar to what NRC already does.

We will also review several discussion drafts that should attract bipartisan support.

We will consider the Nuclear Advisory Committee Reform Act, which directs this important advisory committee to focus on issues that are new and safety significant, to reduce unnecessary time on routine licensing by the NRC.

This is in keeping with the bipartisan goals of the ADVANCE act to be risk-informed, and efficient when reviewing licenses.

The American Enrichment Deployment Act brings the licensing process for enrichment facilities in line with the permitting process for other fuel cycle facilities. It is a critical step to assure efficient licensing as we work to build out critical fuel supply infrastructure.

Finally, the NRC Staff Pay Alignment Act would update the Atomic Energy Act to align the pay authority applicable to certain career SES employees with the pay authorities Congress

provided in the ADVANCE Act. Maintaining experienced and competent leadership at NRC is essential for assuring it carries out its mission.

Our witnesses this morning, all of whom have provided their expert views to the Committee in the past, will provide helpful perspective to these legislative proposals.

We welcome back Maria Korsnick, a former chief nuclear officer and plant operator, who heads the Nuclear Energy Institute, and Jeff Merrifield, a former NRC Commissioner, who is speaking on behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Infrastructure Council.

Also, Katy Huff, a professor at the University of Illinois, who was an Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy at DOE in the last Administration, and Jeremy Harrell, who heads ClearPath Action, a leading energy policy advocacy organization, that has helped inform bipartisan reforms.

I look forward to the testimony and discussion and yield back.