Additional Questions for the Record

The Honorable Brett Guthrie (R-KY)

1. **How will the legislation considered during this hearing help support national security in the long run?**

   These bills help strengthen the long-term foundations of U.S. national security by enabling the deployment of advanced reactors, expanding domestic fuel-cycle capabilities, and building the workforce, manufacturing capacity, and supply chains needed to support a growing nuclear sector. Together, they ensure geopolitical leadership abroad, offer the U.S. a resilient grid, and support our national defense.

The Honorable Diana Harshbarger (R-TN)

1. **The Nuclear Advisory Committee Reform Act discussion draft enables ACRS to propose to the Commission emerging technical issues for review. Can you explain if this would provide a useful mechanism to preserve efficiency in the licensing and oversight process while also addressing new and risk-significant issues, especially for cases that the Commission may not initially know about?**

   Yes. NEI supports a regulatory framework that focuses oversight and independent review resources on issues that are truly safety-significant, technically novel, or important to Commission decision-making. Consistent with that objective, allowing ACRS to identify and elevate emerging technical issues could provide a useful mechanism for ensuring that new or risk-significant matters receive appropriate attention without imposing routine reviews on licensing actions where little additional value would be gained.

The Honorable Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA)

1. **You note that to maximize the value of the DOE reactor pilot programs, they should be implemented in a manner that produces clear lessons for subsequent commercial licensing and deployment. You reference the DOE Nuclear Transparency Act as helping build public trust. Can you speak briefly how NRC maintains public transparency?**

   a. **Does NRC inform the public through key steps of the licensing process?**

      Yes. The NRC provides multiple opportunities for public awareness and participation throughout the licensing process. Licensing applications, environmental reviews, proposed actions, hearing opportunities, Commission decisions, and many supporting documents are made publicly available. Additionally, members of the public and other stakeholders can participate through established NRC processes for submitting comments, requesting hearings, and engaging on issues relevant to agency decisions.

b. **Do you see any issues with DOE reporting?**
NEI supports appropriate transparency in DOE nuclear activities. Transparency helps build public confidence and ensures that information generated through demonstration programs can inform future deployment decisions.

c. **Will this help effectuate the larger effort to coordinate NRC and DOE?**
NRC and DOE already maintain strong coordination across a range of nuclear initiatives, including advanced reactor demonstrations, licensing readiness, fuel-cycle development, and technology deployment. Ensuring effective communication among DOE, NRC, industry, and other stakeholders is important as advanced technologies move from demonstration toward broader commercial deployment.

The Honorable Troy Balderson (R-OH)

1. **In your testimony, you note Congress should focus on strengthening the domestic nuclear fuel cycle and ensure timely development of mining, conversion, enrichment, and advanced fuel capabilities. Can you discuss how the American Enrichment Deployment Act will help streamline the licensing and construction process under the Atomic Energy Act to expand our enrichment capacity in a safe and secure manner?**

   The American Enrichment Deployment Act would help facilitate the timely development of domestic enrichment capacity by modernizing the licensing framework for uranium enrichment facilities while preserving the NRC's independent licensing authority, safety oversight responsibilities, and existing public hearing rights. As discussed in NEI's testimony, the legislation would allow certain construction activities to proceed at an applicant's risk before completion of the licensing process, consistent with authorities already available for other fuel-cycle facilities. This can reduce schedule uncertainty and help developers make progress on projects while NRC safety and security reviews continue.

   a. **How else can Congress be helpful in strengthening our nuclear fuel supply chain?**

      Congress has already taken a number of important steps to strengthen U.S. nuclear capabilities through actions such as support for domestic fuel supply, nuclear-supportive tax incentives, DOE demonstration programs, regulatory modernization, and bipartisan support for deployment. Maintaining policies that support access to a competitive and resilient global nuclear fuel supply chain, while encouraging continued domestic investment, will be critical to enabling future growth of the U.S. nuclear fleet and preserving America's leadership in the global nuclear marketplace. NEI appreciates that leadership and looks forward to continuing that dialogue.

2. **Please share your thoughts on the existing re-licensing process for our nation's legacy reactors. As you note—the value of America's 94 existing commercial reactors that provide nearly 20 percent of America's electricity is increasingly important as demand increases due to data centers, AI, and advanced manufacturing.**

And just recently, the Perry Nuclear Power Station in Ohio, which has a generating capacity of well over one thousand megawatts, received a license extension by the N.R.C. to operate through 2046.

How does a safe and efficient re-licensing process help ensure our nation can meet growing demand?

A safe, efficient, and predictable license renewal process helps ensure that existing nuclear plants can continue providing reliable, around-the-clock electricity. As NEI has noted, the operating fleet already supplies more than 40 percent of U.S. clean electricity and preserving that generation is one of the fastest and most cost-effective ways to maintain and expand reliable capacity. The NRC's recent license renewal approvals demonstrate that regulatory efficiency and rigorous safety oversight can go hand in hand.

More broadly, predictable relicensing supports long-term planning by utilities, regulators, customers, and investors. When plants can pursue license renewals through a disciplined and timely process, it provides greater certainty that proven generating assets will remain available to support growing demand. As demand continues to increase, maintaining the existing nuclear fleet through safe long-term operation will be an important part of ensuring a reliable, affordable, and secure electricity system.

a. **Do you or your members think there could be further improvements to this process?**

   The NRC has made significant progress in improving the efficiency and predictability of license renewal reviews while maintaining its strong commitment to safety and technical rigor. Recent license renewal approvals and shorter review timelines demonstrate that modernization efforts can produce meaningful results.

   Looking ahead, NEI believes there are opportunities to continue building on that progress. As more plants pursue operation beyond 80 years, continued efforts to increase predictability, leverage decades of operating experience, focus reviews on safety-significant issues, and provide clear and consistent guidance can help both applicants and the NRC execute reviews efficiently. In addition, as the NRC finalizes a rule that would allow subsequent license renewals to be issued for up to 40 years, ensuring the review process appropriately reflects the greater operating experience available for long-lived plants would help applicants, regulators, and other stakeholders fully realize the benefits of that longer renewal period while maintaining the NRC's high safety standards.

3. **Can you elaborate on why nuclear facilities are among the most secure assets on the electric grid? How are they well positioned to handle and respond to extreme weather events and cyber threats?**

Nuclear facilities are among the most secure assets on the electric grid because they operate under robust physical security, cybersecurity, emergency preparedness, and operational requirements. As noted in NEI's testimony, nuclear plants are hardened

against physical and cyber threats and are designed to continue operating during extreme weather events and other disruptive conditions. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission holds nuclear power plants to the highest security standards of any American industry, and the industry continues to exceed those standards. In addition, nuclear plants refuel only every 18 to 24 months, reducing vulnerability to fuel supply disruptions and enhancing overall energy resilience.

This combination of security, resilience, and fuel reliability allows nuclear plants to provide dependable, around-the-clock power when it is needed most. As electricity demand continues to grow, these attributes make nuclear energy an increasingly important contributor to a reliable, affordable, and secure energy system.