

**Opening Statement of Chairman Fred Upton
Subcommittees on Energy and Power & Environment and the Economy
Hearing on “Oversight of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission”
September 9, 2015**

Today we continue our oversight of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and thank the commissioners for joining us today. I would especially like to welcome Chairman Burns and Commissioner Baran on their first appearance with us since being confirmed a year ago.

Clean, safe nuclear energy is, and will continue to be, a vital component of our diverse energy portfolio. Currently, 99 operating nuclear power plants generate approximately 20 percent of the electricity we consume. In 2016, the first new nuclear power plant in a generation is expected to begin operations in Tennessee, while four more reactors continue to make significant construction progress in Georgia and South Carolina.

Just last week I visited the Cook Plant with my friend and former colleague, West Virginia Senator Shelley Moore Capito. Cook is one of the two nuclear power sites along the shoreline of Lake Michigan in my district. During our tour, we saw firsthand the safety and emergency preparedness upgrades that have taken place over the last four years as a result of the commission’s response to the Fukushima accident in Japan. NRC’s “lessons learned” process was a beneficial reexamination of the United States’ nuclear fleet and identified improvements in safety and performance.

While the commission resolves the remaining safety significant post-Fukushima priorities, I encourage the NRC to next address issues and take action

to increase the efficiency of the organization. Like all government agencies, the NRC has a responsibility to be a good steward of taxpayer resources, be responsive in a transparent and timely manner to its licensees, and adhere to its organizational principles to execute its mission. An NRC well positioned for the 21st century will help ensure nuclear continues to help power the United States for generations to come.