



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

August 16, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am submitting the fourth quarterly report in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 related to the NRC's progress on certain licensing actions and right-sizing commitments consistent with the direction first included in the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, and continued in the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction, and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2019.

The Joint Explanatory Statement directed the Commission to report: 1) "the on-board strength of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, including any identified areas of critical skill shortages and targeted hiring strategies against these shortage areas"; 2) "actions taken to right-size the NRC in accordance with the recommendations of the Project Aim report, to include re-baselining assumptions and projection of FTEs and required budget authority"; 3) "progress to eliminate the backlog of pending licensing actions in the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation by 2017"; and 4) "progress to complete the licensing reviews of pending reactor license renewal applications (power and research reactors), combined license applications, early site permit applications, design certification applications, and uranium recovery applications (initial and renewal) against currently projected schedules."

The FY 2019 staffing level in the agency's enacted appropriation is 3,114 FTE. NRC currently projects that it will utilize 2,922 FTE in 2019, which is approximately 151 FTE below the FY 2018 utilization. The FTE resources cited include the Office of the Inspector General resources.

Over the past 5 years, the NRC's workforce has declined considerably to adjust for changes in workload. During this time, hiring of additional agency staff has been limited to only those skills that are critical to the agency operations or not available within the existing agency workforce. While the agency has been focused on maintaining the staff's core technical capabilities, we recently implemented our enhanced Strategic Workforce Planning process. The results indicated that expected attrition over the next 5 years could result in skill gaps in many core positions throughout the agency. To address these anticipated shortages, we are working to increase the number of entry level hires, in addition to retraining and redeploying current agency staff, partnering with other Federal agencies, and supplementing the NRC workforce with contractor support.

The status of licensing activities is provided in Enclosure 1. The NRC continues to implement activities resulting from Project Aim, as described in Enclosure 2.

Please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Eugene Dacus, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776 if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Kristine L. Svinicki

Enclosures:

1. Progress on Licensing Applications
2. Project Aim Status Update

cc: Senator Patrick Leahy

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
cc: Senator Patrick Leahy

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
cc: Representative Kay Granger