



CHAIRMAN

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

April 30, 2020

The Honorable Mike Braun
Chairman, Subcommittee on Clean Air
and Nuclear Safety
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am submitting the "Semiannual Status Report on the Licensing Activities and Regulatory Duties of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission." The enclosed report covers NRC activities from October 1, 2019, through March 31, 2020, and includes a list of rulemaking activities, their priority and schedule, and actions taken to adhere to the backfit rule, as directed in the Joint Explanatory Statement that accompanied Division C of the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020.

During this period, the NRC had several noteworthy activities in the area of licensing reviews. In December 2019, the NRC staff completed all 21 chapters of the Advanced Safety Evaluation Report (Safety Evaluation Report with No Open Items) for the NuScale small modular reactor design certification application review and issued these chapters to the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards for its review. Also during this reporting period, the NRC issued an early site permit to Tennessee Valley Authority for one or more small modular reactors at the Clinch River site in Tennessee. The staff recently began the technical acceptance review of a custom combined license application for the Aurora micro-reactor, submitted by Oklo Inc. The NRC staff also completed its review and approved a renewed license for the Honeywell Uranium Conversion Facility's operating license. The first ever subsequent license renewals were issued for Turkey Point Units 3 and 4. In March 2020, the NRC staff completed its review and issued subsequent license renewals for Peach Bottom Units 2 and 3.

The agency also submitted three reports to Congress, as required by the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act, describing the licensing process for research and test reactors, the status of the licensing process for accident tolerant fuel, and the uranium recovery flat fee pilot initiative.

Other Noteworthy Activities in the Past 6 Months

From October 2019 to March 2020, the NRC staff conducted 56 security inspections at commercial nuclear power plants and Category I fuel cycle facilities, including five force-on-force inspections involving simulated attacks on the facilities to test the effectiveness of a

licensee's physical protection program. When NRC inspectors identify a security finding during an inspection, they confirm that the licensee implements appropriate compensatory measures to correct the situation.

Additionally, from October 2019 through March 2020, the agency conducted just over 300 public meetings in the Washington, DC area and in states with NRC-licensed or proposed facilities to address a range of NRC issues. Also during this time, the NRC processed 188 of the 205 Freedom of Information Act requests it received.

As you know, on January 31, 2020, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared a public health emergency (PHE) for the United States to aid the nation's healthcare community in responding to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). On March 11, 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak was characterized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization. Shortly before the completion date for this reporting period, the NRC began taking precautionary measures in response to COVID-19 to ensure the health and safety of our workforce in accordance with guidance provided by the Federal Government, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as State and local authorities. Impacts to NRC licensing activities and regulatory duties during this reporting period were minimal and, where appropriate, are noted in the attached report. In particular, preparatory activities included notification in a March 28, 2020, letter by the Director of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation to the industry explaining the process by which NRC will be prepared to grant, upon request from individual licensees, exemptions from the work hour controls specified in 10 CFR 26.205(d)(1)-(d)(7) in accordance with the NRC's regulations in 10 CFR 26.9, "Specific exemptions." Future reports will include additional details on NRC activities resulting from or impacted by the COVID-19 PHE.

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 any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Kristine L. Svinicki

Enclosure:
As stated

cc: Senator Sheldon Whitehouse

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable Mike Braun
Chairman, Subcommittee on Clean Air
and Nuclear Safety
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
cc: Senator Sheldon Whitehouse

The Honorable Bobby L. Rush
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
cc: Representative Fred Upton

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman, Committee on Environment
and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
cc: Senator Thomas R. Carper

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman, Committee on Energy
and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
cc: Representative Greg Walden

The Honorable Paul Tonko
Chairman, Subcommittee on Environment
and Climate Change
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
cc: Representative John Shimkus

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
cc: Representative Mike Simpson

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
cc: Senator Dianne Feinstein