

**Statement of Kristine L. Svinicki
Commissioner, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Before the Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate**

**Hearing on “Review of the NRC’s Near-Term Task Force Recommendations for
Enhancing Reactor Safety in the 21st Century”**

2 August 2011

Thank you, Chairman Boxer, Ranking Member Inhofe, and members of the Committee for the opportunity to appear before you today.

The members of NRC’s Near-Term Task Force covered tremendous ground in the conduct of their 90 day review. After a more extensive examination than earlier, NRC post-Fukushima efforts were able to undertake, the Task Force concluded that a sequence of events like the Fukushima accident is unlikely to occur in the United States and that continued operation and continued licensing activities do not pose an imminent risk to public health and safety.

In providing this safety re-assurance to the Commission and the public, the Task Force’s work – conducted with some urgency, given their mission of finding any near-term deficiencies or re-confirming the safety of continued operations – now allows the agency the opportunity to proceed with the systematic and methodical review of lessons-learned that the Commission established early on.

I believe that wise regulatory decisions depend on public participation and on careful analysis of the likely consequences of regulation. The NRC is now in a position to conduct activities that the Task Force’s short timeframe did not allow them to undertake; namely, a more extensive stakeholder engagement on these issues – and others that will likely emerge -- and opportunities to consider a more comprehensive set of facts regarding the events in Japan and to receive the expert views of the Commission’s Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards.

In that vein, I view the Near-Term Task Force report as an important first step in the process of learning from the events at Fukushima. The conclusions drawn by the six individual members of the Near-Term Task Force must now be open to challenge by our many stakeholders and tested by the scrutiny of a wider body of experts, including the NRC’s technical staff responsible for carrying out any changes the Commission might adopt, prior to final Commission decision-making. I support acting with the appropriate dispatch, but without shortchanging the thoroughness, inclusiveness, and deliberation of our response.

Thank you again for this opportunity and I look forward to answering your questions.