

**Statement of Commissioner Stephen G. Burns to the  
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works**

**March 21, 2018**

Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Carper, and distinguished members of the Committee: I appreciate the opportunity to testify before the Committee on the NRC's Fiscal Year 2019 budget proposal. I support Chairman Svinicki's testimony and agree that the funding we are requesting provides the resources necessary to accomplish the NRC's safety and security mission while continuing to improve the agency's efficiency and effectiveness.

As you know, the NRC has undertaken significant efforts over the last several years to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. Project Aim was a part of those efforts, but by no means the only part. Additional improvements were also implemented to the NRC's rulemaking processes, to its budget formulation, to its fee calculations and billing, and also to agency staffing and workforce planning. Though the vast majority of the specific tasks under Project Aim were completed, its spirit still endures.

It is important, however, to not lose sight of the fundamental safety and security mission of the NRC. From its inception, this congressionally-mandated mission has driven the NRC and continues to be the central focus of what we do every day. We can always strive to better perform that mission and to better risk inform our decisions, but the safety and security of the public must always be the central focus.

Having spent more than 37 years of my professional career with the NRC, I know there are times when we have had to learn from our experience, learn to do better and to improve our performance as a regulator, but on the whole, I can say without a doubt in my mind, I think we hit the mark the vast majority of the time in achieving a high standard of performance.

Over the past year, we have continued to hold the industry accountable through our inspection and oversight program, ensured the effective implementation of lessons learned from the Fukushima Daiichi accident, focused on cyber security, worked effectively with our partners in the States to ensure the safe and secure use of radioactive material, and sought improved performance by fuel cycle facilities.

At the same time, we have undertaken reviews of the first small modular reactors submitted for design certification, are implementing strategies to be better prepared to for review and licensing of advanced reactor designs, and of newly proposed facilities to produce radioisotopes for medical diagnostics and treatment.

Credit belongs largely to the day-to-day work of our dedicated staff in achieving these accomplishments. I appreciate their day-to-day focus on ensuring adequate protection of the public.

As a final matter, I appreciate the Committee's willingness to accommodate my departure at 11am today due to a personal matter. I would be happy, of course, to respond to any follow on questions for the record.

I thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.