NRC NEWS

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SAFETY CULTURE POLICY STATEMENT BRIEFING
OPENING REMARKS OF NRC CHAIRMAN JACZKO

Good afternoon. The Commission meets today to discuss the draft final safety culture policy statement. The development of this policy statement has been a high priority for the agency because we have long recognized the important role that safety culture plays in maintaining safety and security.

Over the past three years, the NRC staff has worked hard to keep the process of developing this policy statement as open, transparent, and inclusive as possible. The agency staff has looked back at our own past work for lessons learned, considered the experience of other regulators and industries, and obtained extensive input from our stakeholders and the public. I want to thank the staff for their efforts, as well as acknowledge our stakeholders for their active participation throughout this lengthy process. Through the safety culture workshop, the extended public comment period, and other public meetings on this issue, the staff and stakeholders have resolved the key issues and achieved a strong overall consensus on the draft final statement.

I look forward to working with my Commission colleagues to bring all our hard work to fruition by finalizing the policy statement. Of course, once we complete this work, the Commission will then move on to the question of what, if any, next steps should follow. Like our policy statements in several other areas – for example, our Advanced Reactor Policy Statement – this policy statement is intended to articulate the Commission's expectations and serve as a guide for the staff's efforts. It is not a rule or regulation, nor is it binding on our licensees.

There is a long history to this effort. Back in early 2008, the Commission decided it was an appropriate time to complement the 1996 policy statement on a safety conscious work environment and the 1989 policy statement on the safe conduct of nuclear power plant operations. As stated then, "After years of work in this area, and after the operating experience of the ROP effort, the Commission should now direct the staff to provide the Commission with a draft 'Policy Statement on Safety Culture.' This policy statement should be broad and explain the Commission's expectations for a healthy safety and security culture at all NRC licensees."

So, here we are today, three years later, and our staff and stakeholders have now faithfully answered that charge.

I look forward to working with my Commission colleagues to bring all our hard work to fruition by finalizing the policy statement. I understand that many of you are interested in continuing the dialogue beyond the policy statement, to what may follow. Right now, however, the Commission is focused on the policy statement itself, and we are very interested to hear about the staff's work and the stakeholder input in developing it. We are pleased to have such a broad range of organizations represented here today. This afternoon, the Commission will hear from three panels: first, a panel of external stakeholders; second, a panel of medical, industrial, and Agreement State representatives; and third, the NRC staff.

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