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CONTACT: Eliot Brenner, 301-415-8200

NRC Chairman Allison M. Macfarlane Announces Decision to Leave NRC

Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairman Allison M. Macfarlane announced today she will leave the NRC effective January 1 to take a position at George Washington University.

Macfarlane, the 15th person to serve as the agency's chairman, was nominated by President Obama to complete the last year of Dr. Gregory Jaczko's term as chair. After the Senate confirmed her, she took over as chair in July 2012. President Obama nominated her for a second term as chair and, in June 2013, she was confirmed to a five-year term ending June 30, 2018.

Macfarlane issued the following statement after notifying the NRC senior managers, the NRC staff, Members of Congress and others:

"I came to the Commission with the mission of righting the ship after a tumultuous period for the Commission, and ensuring that the agency implemented lessons learned from the tragic accident at Fukushima Daiichi, so that the American people can be confident that such an accident will never take place here. With these key objectives accomplished, I am now returning to academia as Director of the Center for International Science and Technology Policy at George Washington University. At George Washington, I will continue to work on nuclear safety and security and for a better public dialogue on nuclear technology through my teaching and writing as well as by training a new generation of specialists in this area.

"It has been a great privilege to serve with the men and women who work for the NRC and public safety with such dedication. I came to the agency as an outsider, but leave with warm feelings for the many friends I have made here. The NRC staff display on a daily basis how seriously they take their responsibility as regulators and I have valued the time I spent with them. I now understand why the Commission is regularly listed as one of the best federal agencies to work for in government."

"Under my leadership, we have:

- Implemented a number of safety improvements including the addition of protective equipment at reactor sites and at regional centers around the country, seismic and flood protection enhancements at power plants, and progress on hardening venting systems at plants of similar design to those at Fukushima;
- given priority to effective engagement with the public;

- heightened attention to the back-end of the fuel cycle, which is of increasing importance as we move to decommission a number of plants;
- met the challenge presented by the court remand of the agency’s “waste confidence” rule and the resultant “continued storage” rule;
- consolidated staff on a single campus at White Flint in Rockville, Md., thus improving the agency’s internal communications and efficiency;
- implemented an agency-wide review to improve effectiveness and efficiency and oversaw the transition to a new generation of senior management leaders at the agency;
- renewed focus on relationships with nuclear regulators in other countries, in part through my chairing of the Multinational Design Evaluation Program, and my membership on the International Nuclear Regulator’s Association, as well as numerous bilateral relationships; and
- enhanced interagency relations by chairing the Interagency Task Force on Radioactive Source Security and the Cybersecurity Forum for Independent and Executive Branch Regulators.

“I have notified the White House of my decision to leave the NRC effective January 1. I am honored that the President placed his trust in me and consider it a great privilege to serve my country in this role. To the men and women of the NRC, I say: I could not have done this job without your dedication and commitment to the agency’s safety and security mission. Together, we have accomplished much, and I feel very confident about the agency’s future.”