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## **NRC's Macfarlane Urges Industry to Focus on Safety and Public Outreach**

Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairman Allison M. Macfarlane urged nuclear power industry leaders today to “keep the lessons of Fukushima alive in your daily operations” while improving safety and fostering better relations with communities around nuclear plants.

In a farewell speech to the Institute for Nuclear Power Operations annual CEO conference in Atlanta, Macfarlane reflected on her two-and-a-half-year tenure as NRC chairman, a period in which the agency implemented safety enhancements inspired by the Japanese nuclear disaster in 2011. She has announced plans to leave the agency at the end of the year.

“We should never view Fukushima as a relic of the distant past that’s no longer relevant,” Macfarlane said. “We need to keep that focus, make it sustainable for the long term, and – for those of us who have been there – we need to continue to tell others what we saw and why it matters.”

Macfarlane stressed the importance of safety culture and public engagement, two major themes of her tenure as NRC chairman.

“Simply put, safety culture starts at the top. A strong commitment to safety on the part of senior management promotes an environment where this commitment is shared at all levels,” she said. The NRC and industry need to emphasize safety culture not only in their own organizations but also in manufacturers and vendors, she said, citing quality control challenges with vendors supplying components to new reactors under construction in Georgia and South Carolina.

“Equally important is how plant management engages with the local community – including the public, law enforcement, local government and interest groups,” she continued. Public outreach should be part of daily operations, not just crisis management. “Industry and the public working together can foster trust that can be called upon in both normal and extenuating circumstances. And while we work every day to prevent those extreme circumstances from occurring, I believe this is a far better approach than assuming the trust will simply materialize in a crisis.”

Macfarlane was nominated to the Commission by President Obama and confirmed by the Senate, taking office as chairman in July 2012. Last month, she announced she would leave the agency effective Jan. 1, 2015, to become director of the Center for International Science and Technology Policy at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.