



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

November 6, 2017

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chairman, Subcommittee on Clean Air
and Nuclear Safety
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am pleased to submit the "Semiannual Status Report on the Licensing Activities and Regulatory Duties of the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission." The enclosed report covers NRC activities from April through September 2017, and includes a list of rulemaking activities, and their priority and schedule, as requested in the Joint Explanatory Statement that accompanied the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017.

During this reporting period, the NRC had under review six license renewal applications for a total of nine power reactors, and two new reactor combined license applications for three proposed new reactors. In addition, the NRC continues to address post-Fukushima safety enhancements, which are described in the enclosed report.

Other Noteworthy Licensing and Regulatory Activities in the Past 6 Months

On May 16, 2017, the NRC published its final environmental impact statement on a proposed medical radioisotope production facility in Columbia, MO. The staff concluded that the environmental impacts would be small and recommended that a construction permit be issued to the applicant, Northwest Medical Isotopes, LLC, barring the identification of any safety issues during the agency's ongoing safety review. There currently are no molybdenum-99 production facilities in the United States, although the NRC has issued a construction permit to SHINE Medical Technologies to build one in Janesville, WI.

On June 1, 2017, the NRC announced that it had received an "A+" from the Small Business Administration for its FY 2017 efforts to meet the Federal contracting goals for small businesses. This marks the fifth consecutive year that the NRC has been recognized for meeting the goals, but the first "A+" rating for the Agency. In FY 2017, the NRC had \$227 million in eligible contracting dollars. Of that amount, over 37 percent went to small businesses, exceeding the agency goal of 32 percent.

On June 13-14, 2017, the NRC hosted its 11th Fuel Cycle Information Exchange. This event enabled NRC staff, licensees, international counterparts, members of the public, and other stakeholders to discuss issues related to uranium enrichment, conversion, and nuclear fuel fabrication. Presentations and discussions during the event included the topics of safety culture, advanced fuels, small modular and advanced reactors, waste disposal, fees, operating experience, and cybersecurity.

On July 11, 2017, the NRC announced that 46 grants totaling \$15 million were awarded to 35 academic institutions in FY 2017. As authorized by Congress, the NRC provides Federal funding opportunities to qualified academic institutions to encourage careers and research in nuclear, mechanical, and electrical engineering; health physics; and related fields to meet expected future workforce needs. These competitive grants are used for scholarships, fellowships, and faculty development. This year's awards went to institutions in 22 States and Puerto Rico, and included minority-serving institutions.

Also in July 2017, the NRC published guidance documents for both submitting and reviewing applications for a second renewal of a plant's operating license, a process referred to as subsequent license renewal. One of the documents, the Generic Aging Lessons Learned for Subsequent License Renewal Report, outlines an acceptable approach for applicants to demonstrate adequate management of plant aging effects. While the other, the Standard Review Plan for Review of Subsequent License Renewal Applications for Nuclear Power Plants, guides the NRC staff in performing safety reviews of these applications.

On August 8, 2017, the Commission approved further actions related to its review of the Department of Energy's application for authorization to construct a high-level radioactive waste repository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada. These next steps involve information-gathering activities related to the suspended adjudication on the application and will enable efficient, informed decisions in support of executing any further appropriations of funds from the High-Level Waste Program. Specifically, the Commission directed agency staff to hold a virtual meeting of the Licensing Support Network Advisory Review Panel to discuss with the advisory panel members and the public, the reconstitution of the Licensing Support Network or a suitable replacement system. The Commission limited expenditures for the information-gathering activities to \$110,000 of previously appropriated funds from the Nuclear Waste Fund.

In late September 2017, the NRC published a notice in the *Federal Register* seeking public comment on its draft FY 2018–2022 Strategic Plan. Consistent with previous years, the draft FY 2018–2022 Strategic Plan focuses on the NRC's mission and strategic goals of safety and security. One notable change is a new vision statement that highlights the agency's commitment to its Principles of Good Regulation.

Rulemaking activities during the reporting period included seeking public comment on a draft regulatory basis for new emergency preparedness requirements for small modular reactors and other technologies, such as non-light-water reactors. The NRC also published amendments to its existing regulations to reflect the licensing, inspection, special project, and annual fees it will charge applicants and licensees for FY 2017. The amendments include fees required by law to recover approximately 90 percent of the agency's budget. In addition, the Commission approved amendments to its requirements for medical uses of radioactive materials (10 CFR Part 35), to be published in the coming months, which include amending the definition of medical events associated with permanent implant brachytherapy and changes to training and experience requirements for various users. Also during the reporting period, the Commission directed the staff to issue a supplemental proposed rule incorporating a single compliance period of 1,000 years for all low-level waste disposal sites, and to grandfather the existing operating sites from the new regulations if they do not plan to accept additional depleted uranium in the future. On August 11, 2017, the NRC announced that in fall 2017 it would begin a retrospective review of its administrative regulations to identify those that are outdated or duplicative. The selected regulations will be evaluated to determine whether they can be eliminated without impacting the agency's safety and security mission.

The NRC will seek input from stakeholders through public meetings and a *Federal Register* notice.

Finally, from April through September 2017, the agency conducted approximately 465 public meetings, both in the Washington, DC, area and around the country, addressing a full range of NRC issues. The meetings included Commission, advisory committee, licensing board, and staff-sponsored events. Also during this time, the NRC received 264 new Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and closed 339 FOIA requests.

Please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Eugene Dacus, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776, if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Kristine L. Svinicki

Enclosure:
As stated

cc: Senator Sheldon Whitehouse

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chairman, Subcommittee on Clean Air
and Nuclear Safety
Committee on Environment and Public
Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
cc: Senator Sheldon Whitehouse

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman, Committee on Environment
and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
cc: Senator Thomas R. Carper

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman, Committee on Energy
and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
cc: Representative Frank Pallone, Jr.

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
cc: Representative Bobby L. Rush

The Honorable John Shimkus
Chairman, Subcommittee on Environment
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
cc: Representative Paul Tonko

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
cc: Representative Marcy Kaptur

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
cc: Senator Dianne Feinstein