



CHAIRMAN

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

August 16, 2019

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your July 15, 2019, letter expressing concerns about potential changes to the NRC's Reactor Oversight Process (ROP). In a June 28, 2019, paper to the Commission, the NRC staff proposed a set of near-term ROP modifications.<sup>1</sup> You requested "that NRC hold a public comment period prior to Commissioners voting on any changes."

On August 7, 2019, the NRC staff issued a *Federal Register* notice (FRN) announcing an extended 60-day period for the public to comment on the recommendations in the staff's paper, as well as other possible long-term changes to the ROP that the staff is currently evaluating. These include potential changes to problem-identification-and-resolution inspections, the cross-cutting issues process, inspection of independent spent fuel storage installations, the radiation protection inspection program, and the significance determination process. The FRN also solicits public comment on "any other areas of the ROP that the staff should consider." Once the public comment period ends, any comments received will be forwarded to the Commission for its consideration.

In addition to this extended public comment period, the NRC staff will continue ongoing stakeholder outreach related to potential ROP changes. Links to all documents, presentations, and meeting summaries associated with the staff's assessment of the ROP are presented on a dedicated page of the NRC's public website. The NRC staff will continue to host monthly public meetings on the ROP to solicit feedback and discuss the status of the ROP, including this initiative. These meetings are conducted at NRC headquarters with a teleconference option for those unable to attend in person, and are, as you indicated in your letter, Category 2 meetings that invite the public to participate at designated points in the agenda to discuss regulatory issues with the agency, ask questions and provide comments.

Finally, I would like to update you on the status of the first concern in your letter—replacing NRC inspections with industry self-assessments. This industry proposal is referenced in the staff's recent ROP paper to the Commission and was discussed in depth in a paper submitted to the Commission last year that focused on engineering inspections.<sup>2</sup> Although both papers are pending before the Commission for its consideration, the staff is no longer considering this industry proposal.

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<sup>1</sup> SECY-19-0067, "Recommendations for Enhancing the Reactor Oversight Process"

<sup>2</sup> SECY-18-0113, "Recommendations for Modifying the Reactor Oversight Process Engineering Inspections"

I appreciate your interest in these matters. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me or have your staff contact Eugene Dacus, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Svinicki', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kristine L. Svinicki

cc: Representative Greg Walden

Identical letter sent to:

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

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairwoman, Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515  
cc: Representative Kay Granger

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

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