



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

April 30, 2021

The Honorable Edward Markey
Chairman, Subcommittee on Clean Air,
Climate, and Nuclear Safety
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am submitting the "Semiannual Status Report on the Licensing Activities and Regulatory Duties of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission." The enclosed report covers NRC activities from October 1, 2020, through March 31, 2021, and includes a list of rulemaking activities, their priority and schedule, and actions taken to adhere to the backfit rule, as directed in House Report 116-449 accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021.

During this period, the NRC completed several noteworthy regulatory activities. In October 2020, the NRC staff approved power uprates for Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2 and Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, Unit 2. The NRC staff also accepted for review an application for a subsequent license renewal of the reactors at North Anna and sought public comment on environmental review topics related to that application. In November 2020, the NRC staff sought public comment on the draft environmental impact statement on the proposed transfer of mine waste from the former Northeast Church Rock site in New Mexico to an existing mill site nearby for permanent disposal. The NRC staff also approved a license transfer for the Indian Point Energy Center. In December 2020, the NRC staff approved the license transfer for Three Mile Island Nuclear Station, Unit 2. In January 2021, the NRC staff accepted the application for subsequent license renewal of the reactors at Point Beach. The NRC staff also approved a power uprate for Oconee Nuclear Station, Units 1, 2, and 3. In February 2021, the NRC staff sought public comment on environmental review topics for the Point Beach subsequent license renewal application. The NRC staff approved changes to the emergency planning requirements at Duane Arnold Energy Center, which is undergoing decommissioning. In March 2021, the NRC issued annual assessment letters for all operating nuclear plants in the United States, which included 90 reactors assessed to be performing in the highest safety category, three reactors falling into the second highest safety category, and one reactor in the third category of degraded performance requiring a higher level of oversight. Also in March, the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board issued a decision to deny a hearing request for the North Anna subsequent license renewal application; the petitioners have an opportunity to file an appeal with the Commission.

Other Noteworthy Activities in the Past 6 Months

From October 2020 through March 2021, the NRC staff conducted 79 security inspections at commercial nuclear power plants and Category I fuel cycle facilities. This includes a total of nine force-on-force inspections involving simulated attacks on the selected

facility to test the effectiveness of the licensee's physical protection program. As detailed in the enclosed report, due to concerns related to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic, the agency suspended full-scope NRC-conducted force-on-force inspections in calendar year 2020 and implemented a limited-scope inspection procedure at sites where the full inspections could not be completed (a total of seven for this reporting period). In the first quarter of calendar year 2021, the NRC has conducted two full-scope force-on-force inspections (using COVID-19 precautions).

In December 2020, as part of the NRC's commitment to openness and transparency, the agency unveiled a new public website design that improves navigation and usability as well as access on mobile devices. From October 2020 through March 2021, the agency announced 304 public meetings to address a range of NRC issues. In March 2021, the NRC hosted the annual Regulatory Information Conference (RIC). For the first time in its 33-year history, the RIC was held entirely virtually, attracting more than 4,000 registrants, the largest number of registrants for any RIC. Also in March, the NRC revised its policy statement on enhancing participation in public meetings. Additionally, during this reporting period, the NRC processed 106 Freedom of Information Act requests and received an additional 134 new requests.

During this reporting period, the NRC continued to take significant actions in response to COVID-19. The agency continued using precautionary measures to help ensure the health and safety of its workforce, licensees' staff, and stakeholders in accordance with guidance provided by the Federal Government, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of Personnel Management, as well as State and local authorities. These measures served to protect public health and safety through inspection and oversight activities while limiting opportunities for the spread of the virus. Impacts to NRC licensing activities and regulatory duties during this reporting period were minimal and, where appropriate, are noted in the attached report.

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,

Christopher T. Hanson

Enclosure:
As stated

cc: Senator James Inhofe

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable Edward Markey
Chairman, Subcommittee on Clean Air,
Climate, and Nuclear Safety
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
cc: Senator James Inhofe

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

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

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 Paul Tonko
Chairman, Subcommittee on Environment
and Climate Change
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
cc: Representative David B. McKinley

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

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