

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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ALL EMPLOYEES MEETING

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TUESDAY,
OCTOBER 19, 2021

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The Commission met via Videoconference, at 10:00 a.m.
EDT, Christopher T. Hanson, Chairman, presiding.

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

CHRISTOPHER T. HANSON, Chairman

JEFF BARAN, Commissioner

DAVID A. WRIGHT, Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT:

ROCHELLE BAVOL, Acting Secretary of the Commission

MARIAN ZOBLER, General Counsel

NRC STAFF:

DAN H. DORMAN, Executive Director of Operations

KATHLEEN M. DUNSAVAGE, Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)

MARY A. LAMARY, Chief Human Capital Officer

MARK D. LOMBARD, Office of Enforcement

DAVID J. NELSON, OCIO

LANCE J. RAKOVAN, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards

JUSTIN A. VAZQUEZ, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

ALSO PRESENT:

SHERYL SANCHEZ, President, National Treasury

Employees Union (NTEU) Chapter 208

PROCEEDINGS

10:01 a.m.

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2
3 MR. RAKOVAN: Good morning. For those of you who
4 don't know me, I'm Lance Rakovan, and I will be helping manage the interface
5 between the virtual, and in room participants for today's commission all hands.
6 We are using Teams live event for our meeting today. As a reminder,
7 audience members will not have access to the microphone, or be able to show
8 video. Please submit your questions using the Teams live event Q&A
9 feature.

10 Remember that only the moderators, and presenters will be
11 able to see the questions that you submit, and you will have the option to
12 submit the questions anonymously. So, if you have a follow up question, for
13 example, if you have a question that you didn't have a chance to ask prior to
14 the meeting that you'd like to ask now, please send it to us through the Q&A
15 feature. The commission will try to answer as many of those questions in real
16 time as time permits.

17 As we ask those questions, we'll also do our best to post the
18 questions asked in the announcement bar on the right side of your screen.
19 Two members of the NRC's Toastmasters Club are in the commissioner's
20 hearing room, and will be reading questions to the commission today. We
21 will be looking for trends in the questions that are asked, and will be passing
22 those to Kathleen Dunsavage and Justin Vazquez to pose to the commission.

23 They will be also reading some of the questions submitted
24 in advance of the meeting that received a high number of likes. Remember
25 that Microsoft Teams live events gives you the ability to pause and resume
26 the event if you need to step away for a moment, so you won't miss any of the

1 meeting. You also have the ability to use closed captioning. Those features
2 are included in the meeting's toolbar where you normally access Teams
3 features.

4 With that, I will turn things over to Dan Dorman, our new
5 executive director for operations who will get the meeting going in the
6 Commissioner's hearing room. Dan?

7 MR. DORMAN: Thank you Lance, and good afternoon
8 Chairman, Commissioners, NRC staff. Welcome to the 30th Annual All
9 Hands Meeting between the NRC staff, and the Commission. This is a public
10 meeting, so I'd also like to welcome members of the public, and media who
11 might be joining us today. This is our second all hands meeting with the
12 Commission being brought to the staff entirely virtually, and my first all hands
13 meeting serving as Executive Director for Operations; however it is my 30th
14 all hands meeting that I've attended.

15 These meetings have always provided an excellent forum to
16 meet with the Commission on a broad variety of topics of interest to us all.
17 Today, like in past years, this is an opportunity to have an open dialogue with
18 the commission, and get their perspectives on the NRC's accomplishments,
19 and challenges over the past year. On behalf of the staff, I would like to say
20 thank you to Chairman Hanson, Commissioner Baran, and Commissioner
21 Wright for continuing to support this important event, and for taking the time
22 to meet with us.

23 The meeting will begin with the Chairman, and each
24 Commissioner providing individual remarks, and the remainder of the meeting
25 is reserved for employees to ask questions. As Lance indicated, I urge you
26 all to submit your questions via the live event Q&A feature. This is a unique

1 opportunity for the staff to engage directly with the commission, and discuss
2 the important issues facing the agency, and I encourage you to take
3 advantage of it.

4 Coordinating a meeting like this would not be possible
5 without the help of our dedicated volunteers. So, I'd like to also, just as Lance
6 did, recognize Justin Vasquez from the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation,
7 and Kathleen Dunsavage from the Office of the Chief Information Officer.
8 Justin, and Kathleen are, as Lance indicated, members of our Toastmasters
9 Club, and will be reading the questions for us today.

10 I'd also like to thank the employees from the various offices
11 from across the agency who helped organize this meeting, many of whom are
12 currently working behind the scenes to ensure that the meeting runs smoothly.
13 We sincerely appreciate your planning efforts to provide the necessary
14 technical and logistical support to allow us to come together virtually today.
15 Finally, I'd like to recognize Ms. Sheryl Sanchez, president of NRC's chapter
16 of the National Treasury Employees Union, who is also joining us virtually
17 today.

18 And following the commission's remarks, and the question
19 and answer period, Ms. Sanchez will have an opportunity to provide remarks
20 on behalf of the union. Now, without further delay, I will turn the meeting over
21 to you, Chairman Hanson.

22 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thanks Dan, good morning
23 everyone, it's a pleasure to be with you. I'm going to keep my remarks
24 reasonably brief, I want to give my colleagues an opportunity to talk, and also
25 look forward to hearing all of your questions. As many of you know, I like to
26 kind of start my remarks generally with a list of thank yous. So, thank you to

1 everyone who helped put this meeting together.

2 We're joined in the commission hearing room this morning
3 obviously by my colleagues, and by Dan, and also Marian Zobler from the
4 general counsel, Rochelle from SECY, and of course Justin, and Kathleen are
5 going to help us moderate this as well, Wes, and Sergio are in the background
6 managing things ably as they often do. So, thanks to everyone for being
7 here. And thanks to all of you who are joining us online for this Microsoft
8 Teams live event. Your participation, and your engagement with the
9 commission is something that we really value, and look forward to the
10 discussion this morning.

11 I know we're going to talk a lot, based on some of the
12 advance questions that have come in, about COVID, and about reentry. It
13 was 18 months ago that we kind of almost, unbeknownst to many of us, we
14 kind of stood on a precipice for a big change in going to almost all remote
15 work, and telework. And here we are 18 months later in October, kind of on
16 the verge of another change, where we're looking at coming back into the
17 office.

18 And just as that change all those months ago was a little
19 bumpy, I think we can expect this one to be too. That's not to say that it won't
20 be ultimately rewarding in terms of the work that we do, because I really do
21 think it will. But I think it will be a change, and change is hard for people, and
22 I think handling this as the staff has, professionally, and ably, and with some
23 grace, and patience, and empathy as we have throughout this entire period I
24 think is really important, and no less than I think I would expect from the NRC
25 staff.

26 So, I really want to acknowledge that kind of up front, that

1 we're looking at some changes coming up here, and that we really are, as an
2 organization, all in this together. On a personal note, I kind of look forward to
3 having people back in the office. My office has been coming in two days a
4 week for probably the last 14, or 15 months, and quite honestly it's been more
5 than that this fall, as things have been pretty busy.

6 So, personally I kind of like to see people around the office
7 a little bit. We've been running about 10, 15 percent occupancy over the
8 summer, and while I've had the opportunity to meet many people over Teams,
9 through coffee chats, and other kinds of meetings, actually seeing people face
10 to face, I think would be good too. So, with that, I think I'll hand it over to
11 Commissioner Baran.

12 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Thanks. Welcome everyone,
13 it's great to be here today with my colleagues for this virtual all employees
14 meeting. I appreciate all of you taking the time to join us remotely. This
15 annual meeting is a great opportunity for you to share your thoughts about
16 how things are going at the agency, and ask the questions you have on your
17 mind. I want to start by congratulating Dan Dorman on his selection as EDO,
18 and Darrel Roberts, and Cathy Haney on their new deputy EDO positions.

19 I'm confident that Dan, Daryl, and Cathy will make a terrific
20 team, and that they will provide strong, experienced leadership for the agency.
21 This has obviously been a very challenging year, and a half with the pandemic,
22 and as Chairman Hanson noted, we have a major milestone coming up, which
23 is reentry. I know some people are excited about getting back into the office
24 more, others are nervous about it, or trying to figure out what the new routine
25 will look like.

26 Either way, it will be an adjustment. My sense is that things

1 will look pretty different than they did before the pandemic, I anticipate that
2 we'll see more people teleworking. Some folks may want to come in every
3 day, others may want to work from home a few days each week. Hopefully
4 people will ultimately be more satisfied with their schedule than they were
5 before COVID.

6 I know some folks have really enjoyed 100 percent telework,
7 and would prefer to keep doing that indefinitely. I can completely understand
8 that preference. NRC, like other federal agencies, and really like pretty much
9 every large organization, and company is trying to balance that interest with
10 the long-term effectiveness of the organization. Across the government, and
11 the private sector, we're seeing most organizations planning to have
12 employees come into the office at least some days in order to maintain the
13 organizational culture.

14 It's hard to bring new employees into the agency, and instill
15 a sense of community without face to face interaction, and with a number of
16 employees retiring, or getting close to retiring, in-person mentorship, and
17 knowledge management is vital too. Of course we all want to stay safe, that's
18 critical. Looking forward, everyone working at NRC will be vaccinated. On
19 top of that, we're all wearing masks, and the agency has enhanced cleaning
20 protocols.

21 Because of all that, it should be a very low risk environment
22 when it comes to COVID. We're also in the midst of a return to in person
23 inspections. Resident inspectors are now back on site, and the regions are
24 getting back to in person team safety, and security inspections. I think it's
25 very positive that the staff has set a goal of getting back to normal levels of
26 oversight this year. During the pandemic, some inspections were performed

1 remotely out of necessity.

2 I see that as a temporary measure that made sense during
3 an extremely unusual, and challenging public health emergency. As we
4 move into the new normal, I think there is broad agreement on the value of,
5 and need for in person safety, and security inspections. There's just no
6 substitute for having independent NRC inspectors on site. There will
7 understandably be lots of questions about COVID, and reentry today, with so
8 much going on across the agency right now, this is also a great forum to talk
9 about policy, and programmatic issues. Thank you all for the work you do,
10 and I look forward to your questions, and a good discussion, thanks.

11 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thanks Commissioner Baran.
12 Commissioner Wright?

13 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Thank you, good morning
14 Chairman, Commissioner Baran. Dan, thank you for opening up the meeting,
15 and again to follow up on Commissioner Baran, congratulations on your
16 selection, and also I look forward to working with you, as well as Darrell, and
17 Cathy in their new roles too. So, let me begin with a sentiment very similar
18 to what I've heard already, and that is it's surreal to be here. This is our
19 second all employees meeting where it's just the commission, and a handful
20 of people here in the hearing room, although it's more than we've had, with
21 the rest of you attending virtually.

22 While it's nice to be here in person with my colleagues, I
23 have to say, I'd much rather be trying to see through the blinding lights across
24 the street on the stage, to see in the hotel ballroom over there, actually I really
25 don't miss the blinding lights, because they really do blind you up there. But
26 I do miss seeing all of you in person. And to those of you in the regions,

1 again, you're way ahead of the curve, because you participated this way for
2 years, virtually.

3 But even so, you should know that I'm anxious to get back
4 out on the road, and to see each of you in person as well. With reentry
5 coming up, we'll certainly have additional opportunities to see each other in
6 person. Personally, I'm grateful for that opportunity showing itself, and
7 although I do recognize that with that change, uncertainty, and anxiety for
8 some will come, especially for those who haven't been back in the building, in
9 any NRC building probably since March of last year.

10 But as I've said many times, and in many contexts, I
11 recognize that change can be hard. But if COVID has given us anything, it
12 has forced us to deal with unexpected changes, and adapt to them. So, the
13 unexpected challenges, and trials in our lives, like what COVID has presented
14 us, it also presents us with opportunities, including the opportunity to adapt to
15 a new normal that hopefully will be more like our old normal was.

16 And again, that's something that gives me hope, and
17 gratitude. And speaking of gratitude, I'd like to give a special thank you to the
18 task force, those staff members who have been involved in the COVID task
19 force, Darrell Roberts from OEDO, and Mary Lamary from OCHCO, Jack
20 Giessner from region three, Mark Lombard from OE, James Corbett from
21 Admin, David Castelveter of OPA, Cathy Scott from OGC, Sherri Miotla from
22 OEDO, and Mary Frances Woods from OGC.

23 These individuals have taken on the challenge of, and the
24 challenging task of processing, and communicating guidance on the
25 continually changing COVID landscape from multiple agencies including
26 OMB, GSA, and the CDC. It's because of their work, and the work of so many

1 others that work every day to implement this guidance, and new protocols like
2 OCIO, OCHCO, Admin, along with the amazing contractors who are
3 constantly cleaning, and they've been renovating our building as well in a way
4 that we know with confidence that our NRC buildings are going to be safe to
5 return to, as well as what to expect upon return.

6 So, as a follow the law kind of guy, I appreciate that the
7 COVID task force is using, and implementing the rules, and guidance from
8 OMB, and CDC to set our strike zone so to speak. The rules, and guidance
9 from our nation's experts have evolved over time as more data has become
10 available, and we'll most likely continue to evolve as we move forward, as
11 circumstances change. If you're like me, this can be confusing at times, but
12 I know that the task force is confident, and capable, and is on top of it,
13 especially what's happening all across government, and this landscape.

14 And will communicate to us any, and all changes as they
15 occur, as well as what it means to us as employees at the agency. So, not
16 everything's gone perfectly, nothing really does, but I am still humbled by the
17 NRC staff's resilience, and innovation during the last year. You've all
18 achieved so much since this time last year. No way can I cover everything
19 that you've done, so I'll just quickly name a few. Since we last met, you have
20 issued a license for the ISP Consolidated Interim Storage Facility, and done
21 considerable work on the Holtec Consolidated Interim Storage Facility
22 application.

23 You're hard at work at part 53, and licensing Vogtle 3.
24 You've developed the NRC's fiscal year '22 through '26 strategic plan.
25 You've pursued transformation, and innovation initiatives, you've approved
26 digital I&C licensing actions, and improved budgeting to address NEIMA.

1 Your resilience, your focus, and your dedication to our mission is obvious, so
2 thank you. I'd also like to take just a moment to thank my colleagues, and
3 their staff.

4 Chairman Hanson, Commissioner Baran, as I know them,
5 Chris, and Jeff, thank you, I really appreciate the discussions we have on
6 various topics, and ideas, and proposals before us. And my team
7 appreciates the relationships they have with your teams as well, their ability,
8 and willingness to talk through issues, to share their thoughts, and ideas too.

9 So, it's very helpful, I really value the insights, and
10 perspectives of each of you. And I look forward to working with you for
11 several years to come, although I do hope we get two more up here soon,
12 because as we all know, we work better when we have a full complement,
13 right? So, I know there's many questions, Dan, that we're going to have to
14 get to this morning, including a number on reentry. So, I'm not going to take
15 up anymore time.

16 I'm just going to end by saying how much I appreciate each
17 of you taking the time to be here in person today, although be it virtually,
18 because I know there's a lot going on in this agency, and your personal lives
19 as well. So, just know that I'm a phone call away, as my colleagues are, as
20 is my staff. So, again, thank you for all that you do for this agency, and for the
21 American people.

22 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you Commissioner Wright,
23 and Commissioner Baran for both of your remarks. So, with that, questions?

24 MR. RAKOVAN: All right, let's go ahead, and transition to
25 the Q&A. Again, we have our two volunteers in the commissioner's hearing
26 room that will be asking questions both submitted prior to the meeting, as well

1 as those provided through the Teams live event Q&A feature. There is
2 certainly still time to get your questions in, so by all means please use that
3 Q&A feature. With that, I'll turn things over to Justin with the first question,
4 Justin, if you would.

5 MR. VAZQUEZ: Make sure the mic's on, good morning.
6 First question, agency leadership has assured staff repeatedly that employee
7 safety is the top priority, and I trust that staff safety is valued, but given the
8 excellent performance of the agency throughout the pandemic under work at
9 home conditions, please explain why staff must return to the office by
10 November 7th prior to mandatory vaccination requirements becoming
11 effective on November 22nd, and potentially prior to the pandemic abating to
12 the point where the CDC no longer considers facial masks necessary.

13 The November 7th return date does not appear to be related
14 to any objective metric associated with employee safety, or pandemic
15 intensity.

16 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thanks Justin, for that question, let
17 me take a stab at this first, and then I know my colleagues will probably want
18 to weigh in, and I think Dan will too, so we'll kind of crowd source this if you
19 will, for the answer. First of all, let me say that employee safety is paramount
20 here, okay? It is absolutely the first, and the last consideration of agency
21 leadership, of myself, I know my colleagues as we consider, and put together
22 the plans for reentry.

23 The second thing is staff really have done an incredible job
24 working remotely during this pandemic, right? We've gotten inspections
25 done, as Commissioner Baran noted, not necessarily the maximum number
26 of inspection hours, but we met our minimums at the very least, in some cases

1 we came up with innovative ways to conduct inspections. We did policy, we
2 did rulemakings, we did licensing actions, we granted exemptions out the
3 wazoo.

4 Really, incredible work, but it was never intended to be
5 permanent. And there are, I think objectively, certain things that have been
6 lost in the face to face, and personal interactions that have happened. And
7 we knew at some point, that those interactions, those face-to-face interactions
8 would have to be resumed at some level, and I think based on guidance from
9 the rest of the executive branch, and the COVID safe work place task force,
10 and the implementation plan, that time has come.

11 The November 7th date wasn't originally tied to vaccination
12 status, right? The original reentry date was actually the end of September,
13 and that was based on vaccination attestation, and the availability of testing.
14 And we pushed it back to November 7th originally because at the time we
15 needed to put a testing protocol in place, because there wasn't a mandatory
16 vaccination requirement. Well, now that mandatory vaccination requirement
17 changed, as Commissioner Wright said.

18 Circumstances have changed, guidance has changed, and
19 we've adapted along with it. And November 7th, in a way, is as good a date
20 as any for this, right? By November 7th, everyone will have had at least one
21 shot, with special exceptions of course for medical, and religious exemptions.
22 So, they will be within two weeks of having been fully vaccinated. The facilities
23 are safe, I can't emphasize that enough.

24 I mean the incredible work that admin, and others have done
25 to clean the facilities, people are going to be masked. I just saw the numbers
26 yesterday from Mary Lamary, our CHCO, that 77 percent of our employees

1 have uploaded their vaccination cards into the system, so nudge, nudge for
2 those of you who haven't gotten around to it yet. And we expect that number
3 to be significantly higher as we approach November 7th.

4 So, we think the facilities are safe, we think that it's safe to
5 come back, and that with regard to the status of the pandemic, we're going to
6 see peaks, and troughs continue, and we need to adapt, and figure out how
7 to operate in a hybrid environment within that. So, with that I'll invite my
8 colleagues to weigh in.

9 COMMISSIONER BARAN: I thought that was pretty
10 comprehensive. I don't really have anything to add. And as I mentioned in
11 my opening remarks, I think the thrust of this question really gets at, to some
12 extent, can we indefinitely go 100 percent telework as many have? And I do
13 think it absolutely worked well, there's no question that, but for the inspection
14 piece, that has worked well. Can it work well forever? I don't think so.

15 You come to a point where the organization's culture really
16 needs to be maintained, and one of the reasons we've done so well in this
17 past year, and a half is that we all had years, and years of seeing each other
18 in person to build those relationships, and those understandings, and that's
19 how you function so well in this period where no one's in the office.

20 But I think there's kind of an expiration on that, and to
21 maintain the culture that we're so proud of at the agency, and the relationships
22 that are so important to our work, but also that help make work so enjoyable,
23 you have to see each other every once in awhile. And again, I think we're
24 probably going to see a lot more telework than we did pre-COVID. I don't
25 think it's going to be looking exactly like it did obviously, pre-COVID, far from
26 it.

1 But I think as a general matter we, and other federal
2 agencies, and companies, and organizations, I mean truly the whole economy
3 is looking at this, and I think most are coming out the same way, which is you
4 need some face-to-face interaction, and a healthy environment, and we're
5 going to have a lot of protections for everyone. So, I don't know that that
6 really adds anything to what the chairman had, but I don't know if
7 Commissioner Wright has anything, or Dan.

8 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: So, I think you did a really
9 good job summarizing it for sure. Bottom line for me, we have a job to do for
10 the American people, and we're going to get that job done. We've been
11 leaning on the advice from our COVID task force, and they have assured us,
12 and continued to assure us that our building is safe to return to, and that's
13 regardless if we come back, if we did it in September, if we do it on November
14 7th, or if we did it at another time, so it's safe to come back.

15 I know there is concern there, and I agree with both of my
16 colleagues, that that water cooler interaction is something that we really need,
17 and although we've done a really good job, and we can't emphasize that
18 enough, that we have done a good job as an agency, it hasn't been perfect.
19 And there's some things that we can learn, that we can integrate, I agree with
20 Commissioner Baran, that it's not going to be like it used to be, we've learned
21 a lot that we can implement, so I look forward to doing that.

22 But the buildings are safe, and that's the bottom line for as
23 long as they tell us that's the case. So, thank you.

24 MR. DORMAN: Yeah, thank you chairman, and
25 commissioners, and you've all covered it very well, and particularly the timing
26 aspect, I think what I would emphasize again, is this is about the safety of our

1 people. We are providing a workplace that's safe, we left because under the
2 circumstances of the pandemic, it was not safe, and we have reached a point
3 where it is safe for us to come together again.

4 And in terms of the personal interaction, I reflect on our
5 recent rates of attrition from the agency staff, and I look out four, or five years,
6 and it occurs to me that in that time frame, roughly a third of the NRC staff will
7 have no experience of a pre-COVID NRC. And I reflect back to the early part
8 of my career, and the value that I got out of dropping into the cubicles of people
9 who had been here 20, 25, 30 years, and the things that I learned from that
10 experience, and the interactions with them, and rooted in the relationships that
11 were built around that.

12 To me, that's where we've been drawing on our accounts for
13 the last 20 months, and going forward, we're going to need to start putting
14 deposits in those accounts. And that to me is why it's important that we come
15 back together as we move into the future together.

16 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you, thanks everybody,
17 very well said. Kathleen?

18 MS. DUNSAVAGE: These are three related questions.
19 What will the agency do if there is notice of an outbreak of COVID-19 during
20 the day? Are the affected floors to be shut down for sanitization while the
21 employees are sent home? Are we requiring testing of those employees on
22 the affected floors should an outbreak occur?

23 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thanks for that, I'm going to use
24 my discretion, and just hand that to Dan.

25 MR. DORMAN: Thank you Chairman. So, it's a very
26 important question as we come back together, because there is the possibility

1 that we will have an individual either appear symptomatic during the day, or
2 receive a test result from a previous test. And so those protocols are all laid
3 out in the workplace safety implementation plan. We will be doing, as we
4 have done throughout the pandemic, when we have an individual in the
5 facilities who either tests positive, or gets confirmation that they've been
6 exposed to someone who is positive, the COVID coordination team will go into
7 action to identify any other individuals that may have been in close contact.

8 And communicate their exposure to them, and then get into
9 the protocols for isolation, or otherwise. Those have been updated, so if the
10 Chairman will go to Mark Lombard, or Mary Lamary on the specifics of that,
11 but I think the plan includes specific variables in terms of whether the person
12 who is exposed is vaccinated, or unvaccinated as the terms of the protocols
13 going forward. So, Mark, or Mary want to add any detail to that?

14 MR. LOMBARD: I think you covered it very well. The only
15 thing in the question was the term outbreak, and we have not had what I would
16 call, term as an outbreak in any NRC facility. One thing we do for the
17 workplace safety implementation plan, we are ready to review if a person
18 meets the criteria for COVID-19, so if you're questioning, there's some detail
19 to that, three things. One, that they've tested positive for COVID-19.

20 One, they've had a close contact with an individual that
21 tested positive, or they're symptomatic with the symptoms of COVID-19. And
22 then we take the appropriate action working with the individual, and looking at
23 videos, potentially, if we need to, on that particular floor, or floors if they were
24 on areas of the building, and determine if other folks had any close contact
25 with that individual. Again, close contact is 15 minutes over a 24 hour period,
26 and then we take the appropriate action to determine which, if any of those

1 folks who -- anybody who had a close contact, that's a criteria as well, so they
2 would have to quarantine for a period of time.

3 But again, I don't -- we've not had an outbreak per se, in any
4 of the NRC facilities, which I think that's like a whole floor. We never had a
5 whole floor of folks that had to be put under quarantine because of their
6 exposure at an NRC facility.

7 MR. DORMAN: Thanks Mark. Let me just add for
8 emphasis, as we get to about three weeks until reentry, the importance of the
9 self-checking piece of it. So, all of our staff were trained back in the last
10 spring of 2020 on what to do when you come into the building, but that will
11 continue as we go into reentry. I ask every staff member coming into the
12 building, before you come, ask yourself whether you've met any of those
13 criteria that Mark just went through, and in particular, if you're symptomatic.

14 Historically, I think our workforce tends to be a little heroic,
15 and if they feel like they've got a cold, they feel like they can muscle through
16 it today, and you go do that, this is not the time for that kind of heroism. If
17 you've got symptoms, talk to your supervisor, we have that flexibility now, that
18 we didn't have as much before we went out on the pandemic to do your work
19 day anyway, but do it from home because you have those symptoms. So, I
20 think that's an important part of the plan, is every individual's self check.

21 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Okay, thanks, I really appreciate
22 kind of the explication there, and really again in the policies, and procedures
23 that we have, and that we're putting in place, how central again, employee
24 safety really is. So, we just can't emphasize that enough. So, with that,
25 Justin?

26 MR. VAZQUEZ: Please explain why it takes the

1 commission so long to respond to some SECY papers. Some of the SECY
2 papers have been at the commission for well over a year without the staff
3 receiving an SRM in response to the SECY paper. A past reason was that
4 the commission was waiting for a full five members, but a full commission has
5 come, and gone without responding to some outstanding SECY papers. It's
6 hard on the involved staff to plan, and budget for future work without knowing
7 when, or if the commission will respond to a SECY paper.

8 As a potential way forward, can the commission have SECY
9 develop a policy for SECY papers that have not received a response within
10 one year, that the paper is considered disapproved, and the status quo will
11 continue to apply?

12 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you for that. We get this
13 question every year, it's a good question, it's a totally fair question, and I have
14 a three-part answer if my colleagues will indulge me here just a little bit. So,
15 in preparation for this meeting, because we knew this question was going to
16 come up, I brought data, and we love data here at the NRC. Now, granted
17 these statistics that I'm going to quote here, they're just for me, but my
18 colleagues, as you all know, because we're moving together, and we're doing
19 things together, and my previous colleagues Chairman Svinicki, and
20 Commissioner Caputo, we all move together as a unit.

21 Since I came on, Commissioner Wright and I, he was
22 resworn in, and I was sworn in on June 8th of 2020, and since that time I've
23 cast 240 votes. And that includes 96 SECYs, and 112 CORRs, and 28
24 COMSECYs. So, that's about, like I said, that's 240, so that's over 16 months,
25 that's about 15 things a month, or if you do the math, that's a vote every two
26 days. And collectively as a commission, we're processed 123 SRMs.

1 So, and even though there are three of us, we're still moving
2 forward on a lot of that stuff. I think everybody's seen a bunch of votes, and
3 so the second part, so the first part is kind of we're working on it. The second
4 part of that is I've been a staffer, and I know how frustrating it can be to have
5 worked really hard on a project, a paper, or a memo, a deliverable, a piece of
6 legislation, a policy proposal, and not have it necessarily make it to the top of
7 the pile with the principal.

8 And how inscrutable that process, and that prioritization can
9 be. And again, how frustrating that can be, and sometimes it's because those
10 topics are really complicated, sometimes it's because it's overcome by events.
11 I know there are papers out there from '17, '18, '19. I think my colleagues,
12 and I share a commitment to moving those in a timely way, and to executing
13 the business of the Commission. In some cases, Commissioner Baran has
14 voted these things several years ago, and I feel like it's for me, just to catch
15 up, and I'm still doing that.

16 And finally, there is a rather kind of organic process on the
17 Commission for how we take up certain matters that I'm not sure kind of lends
18 itself to a hard, and fast policy about the expiration of SECY papers.
19 Someone had told me once that in Washington, there are only two times, now,
20 and not now. And it's not always clear sometimes when your policy issue,
21 when the time for your policy issue is now, or not now.

22 But there are things that have come up to the Commission
23 where maybe when it came up right away, the time was not now, and as we
24 have an opportunity to look at this, things have evolved, et cetera, the time
25 then is now. So, we're trying to make the time now for more of those things,
26 I think you're seeing that, at least I hope the staff is, and that'll continue to be

1 the case.

2 COMMISSIONER BARAN: I don't know how many parts
3 my answer has, but we'll kind of figure out as we go along I guess. Just
4 briefly, I think the chairman said it well. I personally share the staff's interest
5 in timely commission decisions on voting matters. We definitely, which is
6 true, we definitely have some important papers that have been awaiting a
7 decision for too long, that's true, I think any one of us would admit that. And
8 I think all three of us are focused on that.

9 As the chairman said, I think there's a lot of interest in
10 working through the back log. And I think this is true for all of us when we
11 started, you get there in your first day, and someone, it's usually Annette I
12 think, back when everyone was in the office, would wheel your three boxes of
13 papers in on your first day, and then from day one you're trying to catch up on
14 that.

15 And my goal would be for the next two commissioners not
16 to have that, not to have three boxes on day one. It would be way better if it
17 was far less, and I think everyone agrees on that, and we're working on it. In
18 terms of what's the solution to this? I think the solution is to just keep working
19 on it. I don't think it makes sense to set some kind of firm deadline by which
20 the commission has to decide something, or we assume that the view is
21 unfavorable.

22 I know that as we've been working through the back log,
23 there have been a number of items that had been sitting for awhile, that when
24 the commission got around to voting, the staff recommendation was approved.
25 So, I think having a system that just assumed if it's been awhile, it must mean
26 the commission doesn't like the recommendation, I think that would be a

1 mistake, and I think a lot of recent votes just show that that isn't a very good
2 assumption to make, or a default rule to set.

3 But I agree with the basic premise of the question that timely
4 voting is important, especially when safety, or security issues are at issue.
5 And so with that, I'll turn it over to Commissioner Wright if he has anything.

6 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes, so thank you for
7 referencing the nonlinear feet of box, and paper that I got on the first day that
8 I came in here. So, I share that with Chairman Hanson. So, when I was a
9 new commissioner, very first day, you come in, you don't even have a staff.
10 You've got to hire your staff, you start looking at the papers that are in the box,
11 and you realize you've got to get up to speed, which means everything that's
12 in that box is new, it's brand new, and you've got to go do your due diligence.

13 And then your staff, when you get them on board, which is
14 a good thing that we hire from within usually, because the people have some
15 knowledge, and can help you. If we hired from outside, it would have been
16 probably even slower. So, I really appreciate the fact that when you get in
17 here, and you get your staffs on the interaction that we have quickly, with the
18 other commission offices, and with the staff on educating us on some of the
19 things that are going in within the different business lines, it's very important.

20 So, we really do try from the first day to get things moving,
21 and to socialize with the other commission offices what's important to them,
22 what are they working on, what out of that box, and the new stuff that's coming
23 up that Chairman Hanson referred to awhile ago, we're not sitting still, I can
24 tell you that. So, we're doing the best that we can under any given
25 circumstance.

26 People come, and go, and we know that we're the three that

1 are here right now, and we're committed to each other to try to move as much
2 as we can get moving, and I can tell you our list is long, it is, that we're getting
3 prepared for, so thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you both. Kathleen?

5 MS. DUNSAVAGE: The agency pausing review of
6 reasonable accommodation requests because of the lack of OMB guidance is
7 unacceptable. Current guidance exists, and it should be used to provide
8 some certainty to those who have submitted requests. If other guidance
9 comes out, those decisions should be reevaluated in time. The perception is
10 that the agency is slow walking requests to see who really is willing to get fired.

11 For the rest, they will be forced into a medical procedure that
12 they do not want, or cannot receive for their personal situation, and reasons.
13 There are plenty of questions, and I understand that the agency is going to
14 follow their processes, but that certainly is not a satisfying answer to someone
15 who is looking at being put on unpaid leave, losing their current job, losing
16 their livelihoods in some cases.

17 Nuclear is all some of us have ever done. Losing their
18 pension, not being able to file for unemployment, et cetera. I would request
19 compassion for those in these situations. Flippant responses by some
20 management, and staff members is certainly not helping. What is the agency
21 going to do to give those submitting reasonable accommodation requests
22 some certainty?

23 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thanks for that. Before I hand it
24 off to Dan on the specifics of the reasonable accommodation requests, and
25 that process, and kind of where we are, I want to take the opportunity to
26 reemphasize a couple of things. I do really agree with the person who posed

1 the question about the need for some compassion, and some grace in this,
2 and the way we implement our policies going forward. And certainly a timely,
3 and fair consideration of reasonable accommodation requests is really
4 important.

5 The idea here, as we go forward, and implement the
6 workplace safety implementation plan, and implement these policies isn't to
7 force anybody out, right? We don't want to lose anybody as part of this. We
8 want people to come back to work if they're able, to get vaccinated with certain
9 exceptions, and come back, and fully participate as part of the work force. So
10 there's no hidden agenda here, where we kind of drive people up to, or kind
11 of any attempt what so ever.

12 I don't want people to think that there's any way in which we
13 are attempting to force explicitly, or implicitly, anybody out of the agency. Let
14 me start there, and then I'll hand it off to Dan.

15 MR. DORMAN: Thank you chairman, and I'll reinforce that.
16 That the objective of the mandate is to get people vaccinated for this virus,
17 except where authorized exceptions for medical or religious reasons. And as
18 the question indicated, there has been some uncertainty in the development
19 of the guidelines for those exceptions. I think we're very close on the
20 guidelines for the medical exception. I think there's still work to be done on
21 the religious exception.

22 And I want to be very clear that it's important for persons
23 who are intending to seek an exception to the mandate under either of those
24 criteria to reach out to OCHCO, and inform them of their intent to do that.
25 Once you have that marker on the table as it were, then we're going to let that
26 process work. There is, under the mandate, a process for progressive

1 discipline for those who are not complying with the mandate, or otherwise
2 have an authorized exception.

3 But that process will not begin until the request for exception
4 has been duly processed. And it won't be duly processed until we have the
5 clear guidance in place. So, with that said, let me just check with Mary
6 Lamary, if she wants to add anything else on this item.

7 MS. LAMARY: Thank you very much for the opportunity to
8 clarify that. I want to make one important, important distinction, and that is
9 exceptions to the vaccine may ultimately, some of them, the medical ones be
10 based on a reasonable accommodation. However, the initial part of the
11 question, we have not paused reasonable accommodation requests.
12 Reasonable accommodation requests are still being processed.

13 What we have paused are processing the exceptions to the
14 vaccine mandate for medical or religious reasons. As Dan indicated, we're
15 getting very close on the medical side, but that pause was not an NRC
16 decision. That pause was asked of agencies by the Safer Federal Workplace
17 Task Force so that they could get a view of the whole of government. So, we
18 are processing reasonable accommodation requests, exceptions to the
19 vaccine, we are collecting the data.

20 Because the task force has asked us to pulse our workforce,
21 and get a general idea of where we stand, and so that's what we're doing,
22 we're collecting the information, but we are not processing them, and that is
23 the case for the whole of government, not just NRC. But we are getting close,
24 so we're awaiting that final guidance, thank you.

25 MR. DORMAN: Thank you Mary.

26 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thanks Mary and Dan, I

1 appreciate that. Justin, I think it's your turn.

2 MR. VAZQUEZ: All right, we've been taking presubmitted
3 questions up to this point, so we'll take our first live question now. Do the
4 Commissioners feel that the NRC is close to the point where we can start to
5 transition out of the transformation effort, and return to a more normal mode
6 of operation?

7 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Great question. Yes and no. I'll
8 just speak for myself here on transformation. I think that we should continue
9 with transformation efforts, and let me say kind of three, or four things about
10 that. As part of transformation, I think we have to keep our safety mission
11 front, and center. So, transformation in my view isn't meant to be about
12 cutting staff, or meeting budget targets.

13 Transformation is about making better regulatory decisions,
14 and it's about making better regulatory decisions in a couple different ways.
15 First of all, kind of internally with regard to business processes. So, we've
16 seen that with the mission analytics portal, and how that really informed project
17 management for licensing reviews internal to the agency, but also then
18 potentially externally with, we've seen kind of risk informed process
19 exemptions, and putting some of our historic inspection data online, so that
20 people can see that, and see the trends over time for specific facilities.

21 I think it's called MAP-X now, right? So, I think those are
22 all signs of really successfully transformation efforts. I do agree that we
23 shouldn't do transformation just for transformation sake. That there's a
24 certain churn that's associated with that, and I think when I talked about this
25 at the RIC, I said look, we've had a lot of successful efforts, let's institutionalize
26 those, and reap the return on investment. Because it is an investment to

1 make those things, and let's then kind of explore further selected areas for
2 transformation.

3 We have a lot of changes that are facing the agency coming
4 down the pike. We have a changing industry in the way both the current fleet
5 is operating, we have new technologies, we have an increasing portfolio of
6 decommissioning reactors. We have new, and innovative technologies on
7 the materials front, and all of that is going to require some new thinking. We
8 also have demographic changes that the agency is facing. I think Dan said it
9 right, in the next four, to five years, we could have a third of the staff that didn't
10 know life before COVID.

11 That's a lot of turnover, and is going to require some new
12 thinking. And the mission is going to continue to evolve in all of that. And
13 so transformation as an engine for continuous improvement, and as I've
14 spoken about before, as an engine for diversity, and inclusion. One of the
15 great things about transformation in my book was it was about the value of
16 ideas, and not where someone sat in the organization.

17 Anybody who had a great idea about how to change the way
18 we do business, and improve it, and streamline it. And where we're
19 streamlining, it's not just kind of doing more with less, it's actually focusing on
20 high value activities so that then we can take the brain power, the real engine
21 of this agency, and apply it to things that are more safety significant for
22 example, or will yield greater insights about our mission, and our ongoing
23 activities. Again, yield better regulatory decisions.

24 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Well, that's a lot, I don't know
25 that I have too much to add. I guess I would, as the chairman kind of alludes
26 to, in some ways it just depends on what we're talking about here, right? It

1 becomes a little bit of definitions, and semantics. I think there's no end point
2 for the point we would want to have innovative thinking within the agency.
3 Going forward, we want to have innovative thinking. Going forward, if by
4 transformation, we mean using data better in terms of our decision making,
5 we absolutely want to keep doing that.

6 If it's about being ready for new technologies, whether it be
7 advanced reactors, or accident tolerant fuel, or whatever the new technology
8 we're thinking about there, we've had a lot of work still left to do on that, and
9 those are areas where it makes a lot of sense to think through how have we
10 done things historically, and we're probably going to need to do it differently
11 for those.

12 What I've said from the very beginning, and I still believe
13 this, is that transformation can't be about deregulation, can't be about less
14 oversight, can't be about weaker safety and security standards. If we're going
15 to make a change to our standards, or oversight, there should be a solid,
16 convincing safety case for that change. Not a label, or a sense that we should
17 do less. NRC's core responsibility is safety and security.

18 And so doing less is not being efficient, that's just doing less.
19 So, we want to make sure from my point of view, we shouldn't be adjusting
20 safety standards, or oversight based primarily on cost considerations. I'm
21 looking for, as a decision maker on these things, I'm looking for a safety case,
22 and understand is this going to improve safety, is this going to improve the
23 way the agency does its work, is it going to prepare us for new technologies,
24 and new opportunities down the road? That's kind of the lens I look at it
25 through. Thanks.

26 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: So, I don't think it's any

1 surprise to anybody here at this table, I've never really been a fan of the word
2 transformation, I get the concept, I get it. We had Project Aim before that,
3 and we had other things that came before that, and I think that's where the
4 question is kind of getting at, is that we've tried a whole lot of different things,
5 right?

6 And we never really have a follow through. So, call it what
7 you want, transformation, and innovation, but the word is what we use,
8 transformation. But I really think the agency is always going to be evolving.
9 It's going to be morphing, it's going to be innovating, it's going to be
10 recalibrating. I like the recalibration word a lot in this arena. We're going to
11 -- to the chairman's points earlier, as we change we're going to need fresh
12 minds to go with the seasoned ones that we have to move that knowledge
13 transfer forward.

14 And new ideas, new insights, I mean we're going to have to
15 change as the focus of Congress changes, or the focus of the administration
16 changes, or DOE, right? And just looking at what is going to be our role,
17 what's our swim lane as we go forward? As long as we're staying within our
18 swim lane, which is our mission, right? That's the most important thing. So,
19 however we do it going forward, I do think that we will continue to evolve. So,
20 if that's transformation, then I think it's with us for a long time.

21 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Yeah, thank you both. Kathleen?

22 MS. DUNSAVAGE: Did the commission consider
23 significant reduction to the White Flint Complex as part of the reoccupancy
24 plan? With teleworking capabilities, it seems we could cut our building
25 overhead in half easily by sharing office space, and using telework in an
26 efficient manner.

1 CHAIRMAN HANSON: I may pass this off for one thing,
2 but I think the -- let me just say the kind of incredible job that Admin has done
3 throughout this whole thing and preparing the facilities for return. I mean really
4 Jennifer, and the entire facilities team have really done incredible work. Now,
5 while they're doing all that incredible work, they're also trying to look into their
6 crystal ball to see what the world might look like in a few years, and how much
7 space we're going to need.

8 We had anticipated some of this by having kind of this space
9 planning, or space kind of strategic plan if you will, that I think came out about
10 nine months or so ago to think about this kind of thing. And I really, I think
11 the idea here is we're going to kind of have to see how this goes, and see how
12 it evolves, and see how much space we're really going to need. How much
13 occupancy do we have? What does that look like? What kind of space do
14 people want in some cases? Do they want hot desks, do they still want to
15 have cubes? That kind of thing. What's most conducive to the
16 environment?

17 And then figure out what's available to us potentially to
18 release space, or to reconfigure space as we go along. As many people
19 know, I think the floors in One White Flint haven't been redone in about 25
20 years. We'd like to modernize, and update those where we can. Of course,
21 the regions are going through some space planning themselves to bring
22 themselves kind of more in line with GSA requirements, and how those
23 requirements then mesh with COVID safety, and implementation is going to
24 be kind of another layer.

25 So, it's a pretty complex equation, and I've been really
26 impressed with kind of how Admin is tackling it in partnership with other people

1 in the agency to kind of tackle this. I don't know if there are some data points
2 there that Dan, or you, or others want to mention. But obviously,
3 Commissioner Baran.

4 COMMISSIONER BARAN: You know I agree with
5 everything the Chairman said, and the question is a very good one, and what
6 you probably got from the Chairman's answer is people are looking at that
7 question, there's a lot of analysis going into that. The one thing I would just
8 emphasize that the Chairman said, but I would just kind of restate is we are of
9 course, as we all know, we've been talking about it, in a period of real
10 uncertainty.

11 And so when you're talking about space planning, and are
12 you going to give up a floor, two floors in a building, those are really long term
13 decisions, it's hard to reverse them once you make them. So, we want to be
14 cautious as an agency about those decisions in this period of uncertainty.
15 Just how many people are going to telework, how much are they going to
16 telework, those kinds of questions, people can have their guesses right now,
17 but we don't really know how it's going to play out.

18 And I think allowing some time to see how it plays out, and
19 then get a better sense of what are our space needs really going to be before
20 we make a lot of decisions that are kind of irrevocable on space. And so I
21 don't think I said anything different than what the Chairman said, but just kind
22 of putting a little bit more of a fine point on that one piece of it. I don't want to
23 make, we don't want to rush to make decisions that are really hard to fix if we
24 get it wrong, because an assumption we have doesn't pan out.

25 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Was there anything you wanted to
26 add there? Okay, great. Justin?

1 MR. VAZQUEZ: All right. The White House, Congress,
2 the court system, and quite a few other government entities are exempt from
3 the vaccine mandate, has the NRC requested an exemption as it is an
4 independent agency with public safety and security missions? If not, why
5 not?

6 CHAIRMAN HANSON: I am going to hand this over to
7 maybe Marian and Dan in a moment. I would note that the court system, and
8 Congress are actually different branches of government, and I would also note
9 that while we are an independent agency with regard to policy matters from
10 the rest of the executive branch, we are subject to things like Title 5, which
11 actually governs federal employees, and their protections, and so on, and so
12 forth. So, I'll point that out to start, and let Marian take over.

13 MS. ZOBLER: Okay, thank you Chairman. Actually, I
14 don't have much more to add to what you've already said Chairman. The
15 executive order itself does say that it does apply to independent agencies, of
16 which the NRC is one, as an executive branch agency. And therefore, as the
17 Chairman pointed out, this is something to do with employee health and
18 safety, and is the kind of executive order that the NRC will follow under the
19 circumstances.

20 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Kathleen?

21 MS. DUNSAVAGE: Why does the NRC seem to have
22 become a riskaholic? The context, not everything with alcohol is good for you
23 to consume, for example mouthwash, auto antifreeze, et cetera, and could
24 actually do substantial harm, or kill you. Likewise, not everything with the risk
25 label is worthy of consumption. The NRC seems to have lost some of its
26 good judgment in advocating becoming a modern risk informed regulator.

1 Risk is a part of the integrated decision, and not the decision
2 itself. On its own initiative, NRC is using risk to approve changes such that
3 the design basis of plants is no longer bounding, for example accident
4 leakage, and CDF, and LERF measures take precedence over the dose to
5 workers, and the public.

6 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thanks for that question. I have
7 a joke in there somewhere about not mentioning beer, but I'll just leave it at
8 that. I do, for myself, and I want to give my colleagues an opportunity to
9 weigh in here, I do agree with the idea that risk should be part of an integrated
10 decision-making framework, right? It's not the only thing, that's the difference
11 between risk-informed decision making, and risk-based decision making.

12 I do think that risk-informed decision making can yield some
13 insights. But the foundation of risk thinking in my book is really data. What
14 do we know, how do we know it, and what are the uncertainties around what
15 we know? And sometimes it's characterizing those uncertainties, sometimes
16 that error band is actually pretty big, and we need to take other measures,
17 that's what defense in depth is for, that's what deterministic approaches are
18 for.

19 And sometimes those error bands are small, and we can
20 use a lot of data to better make our regulatory decisions. So, I don't know
21 about being a riskaholic, but I think risk informed thinking is one key piece of
22 our overall decision-making framework.

23 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Yeah, I agree, and I think the
24 premise of the question, and the chairman's response, I agree with both of
25 them in the sense that really risk informed thinking is what we're looking for,
26 and not risk based thinking. The only thing I'd add to that, is I think another

1 kind of element to the question is a concern about labeling versus substance,
2 and I agree with that, that resonates with me.

3 We need to focus on substantive analysis, and not labels.
4 Just labeling an idea, or a proposal risk informed, or transformative doesn't
5 make it a good idea, that's just a slogan. What I'm looking for when I'm
6 making decisions is a safety case, and a real analysis, as I mentioned before.
7 So to me, I agree with that part of it. We do sometimes, I would say in the
8 last couple years, I've seen more times than I'd prefer, cases where we would
9 see a paper, or an element of an idea suggested, and a sentence that said
10 and this would be risk informed, and just left it at that, or this would be
11 transformative, and leave it at that.

12 I want to make sure as an agency, we're going to that next
13 level, and doing the substantive analysis, why is this a good, or bad idea?
14 What effect is it going to have on safety, or not have? Let's not just put a
15 label on it, and assume it's good, let's do the analysis.

16 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: I don't have anything to add
17 to what either one of you said. I do think that one, the label thing is very
18 important, we don't want to do that, we want to be sure that it truly is informed
19 by data, operational experience, historical operations, and all that, right? And
20 driven by our people at boots on the ground level.

21 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Yeah, thank you both. Justin?

22 MR. VAZQUEZ: Culture building was cited as one basis
23 for requiring reentry on November 7th. Is the commission aware of employee
24 attitudes about reentry? Is there a possible concern that requiring reentry
25 when a significant fraction of employees do not wish to return may actually be
26 damaging to agency culture? If employee safety is paramount, then why not

1 wait another month or two when the risk calculus will improve for a great deal
2 of employees, and their families?

3 CHAIRMAN HANSON: That's a good question. I think
4 the cultural aspect of this, the social aspect, the direct interaction, the being
5 able to see body language, et cetera, is really important, and the face-to-face
6 interaction is a really important piece of our work. I agree with Dan 100
7 percent that we've really drawn on our reserves in a way, our cultural reserves
8 over the last 18 months, and we need to get back to a place where we're
9 putting some deposits in.

10 In terms of the date itself, and waiting, I'm not sure that by
11 waiting a month, or two months, or three months, that we're necessarily going
12 to have a lot more certainty. The simple fact of the matter is that the buildings
13 are safe. When people come in on November 7th, a very high percentage, I
14 fully expect over 90 percent of our employees are going to be vaccinated.
15 We're going to be wearing masks, we have occupancy limits on the elevators,
16 we have an Admin staff that is cleaning the facility on a regular basis.

17 Employee health, and safety are really important. We have
18 protocols if someone tests positive, as Mark Lombard pointed out earlier. I
19 think about this a little bit, and well, if we waited two weeks to say November
20 22nd, well that's the week of Thanksgiving, and no one wants to come back
21 the week of Thanksgiving. We could wait until the 8th of December, and
22 that's when contractors are coming back, but that's the middle, at that point
23 it's Christmas. So, why not wait until the new year?

24 There is always going to be another time out there, and I'm
25 genuinely not trying to minimize concern about the upcoming date. I think
26 there's a lot of anxiety about that, and I think it's entirely justifiable, but we

1 have a process where the baseline is two days a week in the office, so there's
2 a significant amount of telework that's going to be allowed in the agency.

3 We have a facility that's safe, we've empowered managers
4 across the agency to show some compassion, and some grace, and some
5 flexibility in the implementation of policies, and I think it's time.

6 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: I agree with you 100 percent
7 Mr. Chairman, on that. But I do recognize, and it does not fall on deaf ears
8 at all, that there are concerns that people have about coming back. I mean
9 it's obvious, we hear it everything from our staffs on down. So, one, I asked
10 questions like everybody's doing here today, I've asked questions as well,
11 because I had concerns myself. Okay, Jeff's got small children, right?

12 Is that a problem? And I've been assured not only is the
13 building safe, and it's cleaned constantly, and it's safe for us to come back to,
14 and our people are vaccinated, and there's protocols in place for those people
15 who are going to be coming to visit, but at the same time, there are programs,
16 and procedures in place that are compassionate, and do show grace for those
17 people who have specific concerns. So, at some point you've got to take that
18 first step, and November 7th is what they've set as the time to come back, and
19 I agree with the Chair, I think it's time to start.

20 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Yeah, well said, thank you. Dan,
21 I don't know if you want to add anything? Okay, all right. Kathleen?

22 MS. DUNSAVAGE: Inspectors, most notably resident
23 inspectors have been coming on site regularly, yet are continually left out of
24 discussions related to the NRC's pandemic response. Is the NRC
25 considering any compensation to inspectors who have been coming on site
26 since the start of the pandemic? Additionally, the NRC hasn't done a great job

1 recruiting, and retaining resident inspectors in the recent past.

2 And this pandemic response hasn't improved that. There
3 seems to be a rather large disconnect between how the agency views the
4 resident position, and how the residents themselves view the position, such
5 that despite the recent resident retention initiatives, it has become even more
6 difficult to retain, and attract qualified inspectors. Why doesn't the NRC
7 appear to value its resident inspectors?

8 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you for that. I think we do
9 value our resident inspectors, I value our resident inspectors. I mean look,
10 the job that our residents have done during the pandemic has really been
11 nothing short of truly remarkable, and in many cases heroic. Continuing to visit
12 plants, when the pandemic first hit, folks obviously took a step back, there was
13 a lot of uncertainty about what was safe, and what wasn't, and I know residents
14 weren't necessarily on site every day.

15 But as things developed, and as we learned more, there was
16 that ongoing on-site presence that is so important for our oversight mission.
17 I've made it a point, I've visited a dozen plants this year, and at every one of
18 those, and I know my colleagues have done the exact same thing, take an
19 hour to talk to resident inspectors. We've done virtual counterpart meetings
20 to hear about the concerns that residents have about both the program, about
21 their day-to-day job, about the specifics of the site where they're at, and this
22 is really important.

23 I think the three of us, and these gentlemen will speak for
24 themselves here in just a minute, are very concerned, we're looking at the
25 data, we're asking for data, we're looking for what are those right things that
26 we can do to make sure that residents are appropriately compensated for the

1 job that they do, and that the program, that that program really is effective in
2 facilitating that direct, and on-site oversight of our licensees. So, with that I'll
3 hand it over.

4 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Sure, well I completely agree
5 with everything the Chairman said. My sense, I assume the residents realize
6 the amount of thought that goes into these questions. They're really site-
7 specific issues. I've talked to each of the regional administrators about this at
8 various times during the pandemic, is it safe to have residents on site at this
9 particular site, in this particular moment on time with community transmission
10 what it was at that location?

11 They're doing those kinds of reviews on regional
12 inspections, and force on forces, and other things. It's a huge area of focus
13 for the agency, and it's happening a lot, a lot of that's fallen to regions, and
14 regional administrators, and the management there to look at it, and make
15 sure that we're doing what's safe there. And I completely agree with the
16 Chairman about there's a lot of focus right now, I think I can speak for
17 everyone on this, people correct me if I'm wrong, but there's been votes cast,
18 and they've all said this.

19 There's a lot of focus on recruitment, and retention, it's a
20 vital position, it's an essential position for the agency, it's the agency's eyes,
21 and ears on the ground at the power reactors, and at the Cat 1 fuel facilities.
22 And we want to make sure it's an attractive position. We want to be able to
23 recruit top talent, we want to be able to retain that talent. We want folks to be
24 happy in this position until they're ready to go off, and do other things within
25 the agency, we want to make sure they have a lot of opportunities when they
26 do.

1 And so I think the three of us in particular have been very
2 forward leading on this. I think we've approved a number of measures that
3 are really all pretty recent, so we'll see what effect that has, and we've all
4 expressed openness to doing more if more needs to be done. And so that
5 part of it's really key. The one part I'll add, and I know this isn't really the
6 question, but I think it's important, is there's a kind of telework element to this
7 too.

8 And I will say one thing I don't think we can do to make the
9 job more attractive, is have a lot of telework with it. This is really, there may
10 be a few hours a week type of telework, and I know that's the regional
11 administrators, and NRR looked at that, and there's a memo out about an
12 appropriate level of telework, but it is admittedly a small level of telework.

13 And why is that? I mean it's a job where being on site is
14 vital, that is the essence of the job. It's walking down the equipment, it's being
15 able to just walk through the plant, and see if something doesn't look right.
16 It's being available to talk to the plant employees, and hear the concerns they
17 have, or kind of pick up their body language about what's going on there. It's
18 the intangible of having someone with an NRC hard hat walking around.

19 And that's really critical, I think there's widespread
20 agreement among the agency's senior leaders about that, that it's just not a
21 job that can be performed from someone's couch, or from someone's desk at
22 home more than a few hours a week. And so to the extent there are folks
23 who really want more of a teleworking environment, this may not be the
24 position for them. But for those who really are excited to be at the plant, walk
25 the plant, talk to folks, really hands on, on site type of experience.

26 We want to make sure those folks are excited about the job,

1 and see it as valuable, and know that we see it as valuable. And if there's
2 more that we can do on that, I think everyone is open to that. Thanks.

3 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Boy, the residents are
4 something that I've been directly involved in, as you know, as you all have too
5 for the last two plus years trying to work with them directly, listen to them when
6 we go to plants, not only do we spend a couple hours with them in rooms by
7 themselves with us, but we carry them throughout the plant with us when we
8 walk it, and we listen, and then we debrief with them, what are you hearing
9 different than you're seeing, right?

10 Any change that happens in the resident program, it's not
11 going to come from me, it's going to come from the bottom up to me. Which
12 is what happened in the resident paper that we just did. We found that there
13 are some things that we're not able to do because we need outside help. But
14 we are trying to form that consensus among the Commission that we can seek
15 that outside help, and to try to get it done. So, we're listening, and it's not a
16 one, and done thing.

17 As Commissioner Baran said, it's going to continually be
18 looked at. So, we're listening, and if you have ideas, pass them up, if you
19 have concerns, pass them up, or call us directly, you know our reactor people,
20 so we're open. I hear you, very important.

21 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Yeah, well said, thank you both.
22 Go ahead Dan.

23 MR. DORMAN: Thank you Chairman and thank you all for
24 your support for the residents, because you have been actively engaged on
25 this, including supporting the staff going outside the agency where we need
26 to. I just also wanted to note that there is an active working group on

1 recruitment and retention of resident inspectors looking at different options,
2 and they're actively engaged on that. I would also say in my prior position,
3 where I was the direct supervisor of the regional administrators, the
4 recruitment.

5 Actively recruiting, and really pressing into our available
6 FTE to get new inspectors, and there's a time involved in taking a new hire,
7 and making a resident inspector out of them, and so we need to be anticipating
8 that, and leaning into that. And I know that Darrell Roberts, going into that
9 position as a former resident inspector, and a former regional administrator is
10 well attuned to those issues as are all of the regional administrators.

11 Who I believe, all of our former resident inspectors as well,
12 it's very much on the forefront of our minds to recruit them, retain them,
13 develop them, and then to have the opportunities for them going forward in
14 the agency. One of the challenges as the agency came down in size in the
15 latter part of the last decade was the overages in headquarters limited the
16 opportunities for resident inspectors to move onto other positions in the
17 agency.

18 And I'm happy to say over the last couple of years, I'm
19 seeing a lot of familiar faces from the resident pool walking around
20 headquarters, or virtually in headquarters, but those opportunities are opening
21 up, and that just means we need to be more focused on making sure we're
22 bringing good inspectors in behind them. So, that is a priority, and will
23 continue to be one.

24 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Great, yeah, thank you Dan for
25 that, really appreciate that. Justin?

26 MR. VAZQUEZ: When I look at the composition of the

1 Commission, and senior management, I do not see a lot of diverse
2 representation from minority communities. What will the commission do to
3 facilitate more minority representation in upper levels of management?

4 CHAIRMAN HANSON: That's a great question. A
5 number of us have spoken about the importance of diversity throughout the
6 organization. I've talked about it with regard to risk informed decision making,
7 and with regard to transformation. It's not good enough, I fully admit, to just
8 say well this thing is really important, but we actually need to take action on
9 that. And I think there are a couple of things going on, and I know we need
10 to be doing more.

11 I think the NRAN program has done a good job of recruiting
12 a diverse class. I think that one area that we can do better in NRAN, is
13 actually the representation of women in that class, and so I think there's that.
14 I think then on the SES CDP has made really great improvements in the last
15 few years on, particularly the representation of women there. This is
16 ultimately all about building the pipeline, it's about building the pipeline.

17 It's about developing talent throughout the organization. It
18 isn't necessarily about having one person here, or one person there, but that
19 actually we're thinking about a systematic approach to the inclusion of diverse
20 voices, and perspectives, and the development of those people into future
21 leaders in the agency. I've been involved in some international efforts on this.

22 I came back from Vienna having met some of my
23 international colleagues who are maybe doing better in this area, particularly
24 with regard to gender equity than us, with some new ideas, and thoughts about
25 it. And I'm talking about those with Mary Lamary, and others, but I want to
26 give my colleagues a chance to weigh in, and maybe Dan has some specific

1 things as well.

2 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Yeah, I'd just briefly make a
3 couple points. When I look at the org chart that starts with Dan, and the
4 DEDOs, that's actually a great diverse slate we have just moving into those
5 positions, and I look at the office directors, and I look at the regional
6 administrators, I'm actually pretty excited about the growing diversity we're
7 seeing in that group. As I looked at that org chart for the last seven years,
8 I'm seeing more, and more women in these top positions, which is terrific.

9 I'm seeing more, and more racial diversity, which is terrific,
10 but that's obviously going to be an ongoing effort. And there have been
11 historically challenges with the SES CDP program, we have not had as an
12 agency the level of diversity heading into the SES that we really need, and
13 there have been a lot of changes made to try to improve that. There may
14 need to be more changes made in the future to continue that trend.

15 We need to have really diverse, not just diverse pools of
16 candidates there, but then diverse class in the CDP so that we have a diverse
17 SES core. And then that rises up, all the way up to the EDO's office. So,
18 there's a lot of work that's going to need to be done over years. I can say in
19 my time here, I've seen a lot of focus on it, and I really think there's been
20 improvement in that time. It's not an immediate thing, obviously, because it
21 takes time to have people work their way into pools to be considered for key
22 positions.

23 But I think we're starting to see the results of those efforts,
24 and I'm excited about that, and I'm excited to see the progress continue.

25 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: It's a good question. I think
26 I look at it a little bit different, I believe we have been doing a good job, I think

1 we've been making a conscious effort to be inclusive, and to try to be diverse.
2 I mean the proof is in the pudding, just point to Margie number one, that
3 happened. And then you've got others that are in place now as
4 Commissioner Baran pointed out, and I do agree that the pipeline has got to
5 grow a little bit, we've got to get more people interested in taking that chance
6 to get it to develop, and put themselves in the position where they can take
7 that next step.

8 Which, I want to see as many people be empowered, and
9 break the ceiling as we can find, because I'm all about that. It just makes the
10 agency better, a better place to work, a better place to just be. So, I think we
11 are doing better than we had been doing for sure. So, I'm encouraged.

12 MR. DORMAN: Thanks for all those remarks, and I
13 appreciate the perspective that we are making progress. I think an area for
14 us to continue to focus, and we'll always need to focus, is between the NРАН,
15 and the CDP, is that whole pipeline in between, and making sure that we are
16 providing developmental opportunities, and growth for all staff equitably, and
17 that will need to, that's all that's going to need to be there. But we need to, I
18 think continue to shine a strong light in that area.

19 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you. Kathleen?

20 MS. DUNSAVAGE: There have been numerous
21 inadvertent releases of personally identifiable information across the federal
22 government. How can I be assured that the upload of my vaccination card
23 will be appropriately handled?

24 CHAIRMAN HANSON: That's a great question. I'll start
25 with just the principle of information security, and cybersecurity, it's critically
26 important, and I know Dave Nelson, and the CIO, it's a huge focus for them,

1 both PII, personally identifiable information, as well as just all of the other
2 information that we keep here in the agency, business sensitive information,
3 and otherwise. But if I could, I'll hand this off to Dan, and maybe Dave to
4 tackle.

5 MR. DORMAN: Yeah, and I think I'll go fairly quickly to
6 Dave, I just want to say that historically the NRC, I'd say in protecting
7 information, and Dave's team, and ensuring the security of our systems ranks
8 fairly consistently among the tops in the federal family, and so I really
9 appreciate the good work that they do. Dave, anything you want to add on
10 this concern.

11 MR. NELSON: Yeah, thank you for this opportunity,
12 appreciate that Dan. We do have the appropriate controls in place, we have
13 a system of records in place to collect this information, and we're protecting
14 the information under the appropriate controls that are set for this type of
15 information. As Dan said, our maturity of our program is rated among the top
16 federal agencies, even the larger agencies, we continue to protect, and
17 improve our cybersecurity posture at every opportunity, and just rest assured
18 that that data is being protected at the full extent of our controls, so thanks.

19 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thanks Dave. Okay, great.
20 Justin?

21 MR. VAZQUEZ: Industry lobbyists seem to have an
22 increasing footprint within the agency. They take up an increasing share of
23 public meetings, and seem to have the expectation the NRC staff will agree
24 with them. What is this commission's approach to dealing with industry
25 lobbyists, and what is the agency doing to avoid the perception, or even the
26 reality of regulatory capture?

1 CHAIRMAN HANSON: That's a good question. I guess I
2 would have to take the questioner's word for it, as to whether or not there's an
3 increasing presence of lobbyists. What I think I would say is the agency is
4 actually, we're doing a lot, we're considering a lot of things. We've got
5 multiple initiatives going on. Part 53, we've taken an entirely new approach
6 to engaging with the public on that, including some representatives of industry,
7 but also public interest groups, and others.

8 We've got the EJ initiative, that has held multiple public
9 meetings, and engaged with the public there. So, I think to say nothing of
10 accident tolerant fuel, and the public meetings on digital I&C, or the meeting
11 this morning I think on security concerns for advanced reactors that NSIR is
12 holding. There's really, we have a lot going on. And so a lot of opportunities
13 to engage the public. I think it's incumbent on us that we provide equal
14 opportunities for all of our external stakeholders to engage with the agency.

15 And so that's not necessarily just industry, but other public
16 interest groups, and community groups, and others. It's important that they
17 have opportunities to make their voices heard, and to feel like they're being
18 heard. I might note that it is a characteristic of lobbyists that they expect you
19 to agree with them, it kind of goes with the job a little bit.

20 But I don't think necessarily that engagement, or
21 participation on the part of lobbyists implies necessary regulatory capture.
22 And I do feel strongly about that based on my interactions with the NRC staff,
23 and particularly getting back to our resident inspectors that five minutes, or
24 ten minutes in the presence of NRC technical staff on a particular issue I think
25 will dissuade almost anyone that this agency has a problem with regulatory
26 capture in my view.

1 I really do feel strongly that every day NRC staff exhibit that
2 independence that you would expect from a high quality technical regulator,
3 and I've just been incredibly impressed about the integrity with which NRC
4 staff interact with our external stakeholders.

5 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Yeah, I think for all
6 stakeholders, and probably for all levels of the agency, whether it's the
7 commission, or public meetings that the staff's holding, I think there are a few
8 things that are really key. The first is, and the chairman talked about this, just
9 access for all stakeholders. That any interested stakeholder has the ability
10 to engage. Another element is to have openness to the variety, range of
11 stakeholder views by the staff, I think that's important, and by Commissioners
12 as well.

13 And then transparency is really important too. I think
14 generally the agency is pretty good about this, so that everyone can see,
15 anyone who is interested can see who is it that's participating in meetings,
16 what are they saying, and so who are folks in the agency talking to, and what
17 are they talking with them about? That transparency is really important.

18 And one of the aspects of the environmental justice initiative
19 that I think is important, and the staff is working on this, and formulating their
20 ideas, and thoughts on things, but it does actually go to one piece of this I
21 think, which is the kind of access piece. And do we have processes that work
22 well for various stakeholders to be able to engage? If you're a disadvantaged
23 community, are you finding our processes accessible?

24 Are you able to connect not just with public meetings, but if
25 you have a petition, or you have a concern, are we setting those processes
26 up in a way that people can express their environmental concern, or health

1 and safety concern, and see that through without it being really, really
2 challenging, right? We don't want to erect barriers to folks being able to raise
3 those concerns or express their views. So, I think that's one piece of it, that
4 this ongoing environmental justice initiative does kind of intersect with this
5 question.

6 But those I think are the real principles. Just be open to a
7 wide range of stakeholders, and stakeholder views, make sure a wide range
8 of stakeholders are able to participate, and then be transparent about all those
9 interactions. And if we do that, then I think we're able to both maintain our
10 independence, which is critical, but also make sure that we're engaging with
11 folks to get as much information, and as many perspectives as we can.

12 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: So, I really like the question,
13 and I think you all have spoken very well to it. I don't think that regulatory
14 capture is an issue in this agency, I mean not by lobbyists, or any other group,
15 or stakeholder set, or anything like that. I do agree, I believe that our
16 principles of good regulations speak to it, and the openness, and
17 transparency. So, we want to get information from as many different sources
18 as we can, it helps us become informed regulators, and informed decision
19 makers.

20 And we're not going to agree with everybody that comes in,
21 and talks to us, we're just not, we don't, and we know it when we're talking to
22 them, and they know it too sometimes, right? But we listen, and we don't
23 demean them, or anything like that. We really try to balance what we're
24 hearing in order to make a good decision, so the information sharing is really
25 helpful to us regardless of where it comes from, and everybody's got to be at
26 the table.

1 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Well said. Kathleen?

2 MS. DUNSAVAGE: What is the agency doing, and what
3 tools are being proactively provided to supervisors to ensure the NRC staff
4 remain mentally healthy? Specifically, what are we doing to ensure there will
5 not be a catastrophic work place event due to the high stress levels being
6 experienced by all levels in the agency?

7 CHAIRMAN HANSON: That's a good question, and before
8 I'm going to hand this off to Dan, I know this has been a subject not just for
9 the NRC, but also for the interagency, and the Safer Workforce Task Force
10 downtown.

11 MR. DORMAN: Yeah, thanks chairman. I think the main
12 tool that we have for staff, and supervisors to assist in this area is our
13 employee assistance program managed out of Mary Lamary's office. So,
14 maybe I'll turn briefly to Mary on this one.

15 MS. LAMARY: Thank you. So, a couple of things, we do
16 have a program, and we do have through our EAP program, seminars and
17 tools on stress management both for the employee, for employee well being,
18 but also for managers, and supervisors. We've delivered -- the EAP program
19 has come to certain offices that have requested it, and delivered it to offices,
20 and we can do that on an as needed basis.

21 I would also say that our employee engagement is also key
22 to this. Managers and supervisors need to engage with staff, and stay
23 connected with them, and sort of make sure that they are touching base with
24 them, and I think part of our reentry will help with that, as we have more
25 personal interactions with folks, and are able to have a better way to gauge
26 how employees are responding. But definitely if you see a need, or have a

1 need yourself, please reach out to the EAP program.

2 MR. DORMAN: Thanks Mary.

3 CHAIRMAN HANSON: I think Dan, you and Mary both
4 raise really good points, that reentry will be stressful, and yet there's also, I
5 don't want to call it an antidote, but maybe an amelioration of some of that
6 stress through some of the interpersonal connections that we're going to have
7 in the workplace again. And that in addition to kind of some of the formal
8 programs that we have, we also have each other, right?

9 We're in this together, and you can go to your colleagues,
10 and say hey, are you doing okay? And how is this working out for you? And
11 how are the kids? And what are you doing with the dog now that you're back
12 at work? And this is some of this basic human interaction too, that can really
13 serve to help with some of these high stress, and ultimately I hope, head off a
14 kind of catastrophic event that the questioner was talking about. Go ahead.

15 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: If I may, thank you so much.
16 This is a really big thing for me, I mean this has been concerning for me since
17 we left back in March 13th of last year. I agree with Mary that the employee
18 assistance program is critical. If you've got an issue, and you need to talk to
19 someone, please do, and they'll put you in touch with someone. Go listen to
20 my RIC speech from March if you haven't seen it.

21 Whether you're here, or you're at home, one of the issues
22 that we had at home is we were by ourselves, things were different, we had
23 our family that was there now. We still had to do our work, and some people
24 thought they had to go overboard, and they could never turn their computer
25 off, and they were on it all the time, right? And so they were getting stressed,
26 they were getting worn down. So, you've got to take time for yourself.

1 I don't care if you're at home, or you're back here, you've got
2 to take time for yourself. The work is going to be here, it's not going to go
3 anywhere. So, you've got to get out, and laugh a little bit, you've got to see
4 nature, you've got to take that deep breath, and just decompress, just do
5 something that's fun, or watch something that's funny, and share experiences
6 with the people that you're in daily contact with, right?

7 One of the things that I found very valuable to me as a
8 Commissioner was sharing with people who worked with me. And they got,
9 all of a sudden you saw oh my gosh, you're going through the same stuff I'm
10 going through, right? And that helps them, it opens up those personal
11 relationship opportunities, right? And I think that's going to be the thing that's
12 going to help us when we come back together, is that will actually help relieve
13 some stress, those personal interactions at the water cooler, and stuff. So,
14 take care of yourself.

15 CHAIRMAN HANSON: I would dare say that a funny thing
16 happened on the way to the RIC, belongs in probably the hall of fame of RIC
17 speeches just for those of you, and I think it is available out there on the
18 Microsoft streaming site. Wes is nodding at me back there in the background,
19 he's giving me the thumbs up, so people can check that out. Commissioner
20 Baran?

21 COMMISSIONER BARAN: That was well said, I don't
22 have anything to add.

23 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Great, thanks.

24 MR. VAZQUEZ: Given the potential exodus of staff who
25 have not provided proof of getting vaccinated, or do not wish to return to the
26 office, what efforts has the agency taken to prepare for a potentially significant

1 loss of staff in the near future?

2 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Well, let me say first of all, the
3 intention isn't to lose any staff at all. We want people to come back to work,
4 to get vaccinated, to be healthy. To get vaccinated to the extent that their
5 preexisting health conditions, and their religious beliefs allow. And so Dan
6 can talk about specific plans, of course we also have some demographic
7 imperatives in the agency itself that have caused us to look at staffing.

8 So, I think we're not starting from scratch on any of that, but
9 I do want to come back to this idea that, the idea here isn't to force anybody
10 out, or to feel like they have to leave. We really do want folks to be healthy,
11 to come back, to stay safe.

12 MR. DORMAN: Thanks chairman, and I'll agree with that,
13 and reinforce that the objective here is to have everybody safe, and everybody
14 back. But we do hear these concerns coming forward from the staff, and
15 there are folks who are concerned that they can't get through this process,
16 and be true to themselves, and come back to the office. So, I think as we go
17 through the next few weeks, and couple of months, we'll see where we're at.

18 But I think the conversations with the offices, there may be
19 impacts to our current FTE availability, but for the core mission of the agency,
20 we expect to have all the resources we need to continue to do that. We may
21 need to do some prioritizing on the sides while we look to go out, and recruit
22 if we need to, to the extent we need to, I know we're going to need to, because
23 our normal attrition, we need to hire 200 people a year, but I'm confident that
24 we will get through this, and sustain our mission, I hope everybody can come
25 along with us.

26 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Okay, Kathleen? No problem.

1 MS. DUNSAVAGE: Some NRC staff are trying to silence
2 other staff by labeling differing views as misinformation. This appears
3 contrary to NRC's Challenger and Columbia shuttle disaster training on the
4 tragic consequences of group think. What will this Commission do to
5 embrace, and encourage differing view, and the need to seriously consider
6 information that is not mainstream?

7 CHAIRMAN HANSON: That's a good question. Group
8 think is real, it happens, we've seen it throughout history. I think that this
9 agency actually does a good job of trying to avoid that. But we're also an
10 agency that is founded on data, and the idea that even when there are error
11 bands, that there is such a thing as objective reality. And so there is a tension
12 there that I'll just acknowledge that has to be considered as we think about
13 some of these things. I don't know what --

14 MR. DORMAN: Yeah, thank you Chairman, and I
15 appreciate the question. I think one of the things that Margie focused on early
16 in her tenure, and I will continue in my tenure, is you mentioned decision
17 making, and a focus on our decision making. But particularly early in the
18 process to welcome all the views on the decision that's before us, and to have
19 an environment where we not only desire, we expect, and welcome the full
20 spectrum of views as we develop the information that we need to make the
21 decision that's before us.

22 So, it's painful to hear that some people are not having that
23 experience, but that is our focus, and our priority, and will continue to be so.
24 So, I think the question I take as a challenge to continue to work with the
25 agency's leadership to make sure that we're building, and sustaining that
26 environment.

1 COMMISSIONER BARAN: I would just add, as I was
2 listening to the question, I wasn't exactly sure what we were talking about. In
3 all my time here, there have been a lot of -- on issues with our substantive
4 missions, safety and security issues that I've seen differing views on a lot of
5 issues, and I've always welcomed them. It's terrific to get all the views on
6 these issues, and I think all the commissioners feel that way.

7 Sometimes it's through the formal processes we have, if you
8 have a differing view, or a nonconcurrence, sometimes it's -- as the trend is, I
9 think in the staff papers, which I think is a very positive thing, just having the
10 discussion within the paper of not all the staff agrees with this position. Here
11 is another view with some detail about what that view is, and over the years
12 I've met many times, folks who had those different views, and learned a lot
13 from them, and sometimes I've ended up agreeing with them, sometimes I
14 haven't, but it's definitely enriched the discussion.

15 In all that time, I don't know that I've ever heard a differing
16 view called misinformation, which kind of makes me think this question is really
17 more of a vaccine type question, because I don't know that I've ever heard
18 that terminology on our mission related type issues. And there, here's the
19 reality, I'm not a doctor, Chris is not a doctor, Dave is not a doctor, Dan is not
20 a doctor. So, and if we pull out that org chart, probably very few medical
21 doctors at the top of the hierarchy of this agency.

22 So, where are we going to get our information about vaccine
23 safety? We're going to go to CDC, where the nation's experts reside on those
24 types of issues. And of course, the information there is that it's safe, and
25 effective. And people can have different views about that, but I'm going to
26 rely on CDC to tell me what the data shows. I'm not going to try to interpret

1 the data myself, and dig through some website, and come up with some idea.

2 I'm going to rely on what CDC says, and I think as an
3 agency, that's what we need to do. We are an agency that's obviously based
4 on science and technology, and I think that's the responsible thing to do. And
5 if that's the nature of the question, then I do think we kind of get more into the
6 factual reality part of what the Chairman said, and the part we were talking
7 about there with the embracing all the views the staff has on our substantive
8 mission issues.

9 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: And I guess if it's not that,
10 one of the things I think that's really important for the staff to understand,
11 because I'll speak for myself, maybe the other commissioners wouldn't agree,
12 sometimes when you have differing views, they can be put forth as an option
13 for consideration by the Commission, if it happens to be in a paper. Like they
14 did, I think with ROP enhancement, right? There was a differing view that
15 was in there.

16 So, if there's those opportunities, I think that's great. One
17 thing I have noticed at the agency here, since I've been here, we've tried to
18 expand on the team focus of trying to, when we start attacking new things,
19 ideas, issues, whatever, and if everybody's involved early, Dan like you said,
20 and you can massage all that stuff as it's going, one, it might limit differing
21 views, because they feel a part, and in the end really only one decision can
22 be made, right?

23 But if there's the opportunity for options to be put in there
24 that covers the basis, take advantage of it.

25 MR. VAZQUEZ: Okay, we're looking at the clock, and it
26 looks like this will be the final question before we hear from NTEU. So, final

1 question, is there any news on when two additional commissioners may be
2 added?

3 COMMISSIONER BARAN: I can take this one, no.

4 CHAIRMAN HANSON: I'm just going to go with that, I'm
5 going to go with Commissioner Baran. We know that Congress in its wisdom
6 created the NRC with five commissioners, but we're, even when we don't
7 always disagree about everything, I really value the working relationship, and
8 the personal relationships I have with both my colleagues, and I think we're
9 getting the job done in the meantime. And when the President is ready to
10 nominate people, and the U.S. Senate is ready to confirm them, we will
11 welcome them with open arms, and I will enthusiastically swear them into the
12 job to help us do the commission's business.

13 COMMISSIONER BARAN: That was better than my
14 answer.

15 CHAIRMAN HANSON: I liked your answer. So, with that,
16 can I welcome Sheryl Sanchez from NTEU? Sheryl, it's always nice to see
17 you, and we welcome your remarks today.

18 MS. SANCHEZ: Thank you. Good morning Chairman
19 Hanson, Commissioners Baran and Wright, and congratulations to our new
20 EDO Dan Dorman. For the first time ever since I've been doing this, I'm
21 asking you to have a little patience and grace with me. I have not prepared
22 any remarks, but during the meeting, I did make note of a few points that I
23 would like to cover. So, I will, if you show me a little grace, I will take less
24 than my allotted time, and then we can get on with our day.

25 Probably the most important thing, other than the fact that
26 I'm much older, thinner, and grayer than last year, that has happened between

1 last year, and now, is that we have a new collective bargaining agreement.
2 After over seven months of bargaining every other week, we have a new CBA
3 which was ratified by a vote of our members on September 14th, and it will be
4 effective on November 14th. So, a few highlights from this, I would like to run
5 through a few of the high-level highlights.

6 We prevented the agency from expanding its discretion
7 when approving or denying telework. All approvals, and denials of telework
8 must be based on telework not diminishing the employee's performance, or
9 agency operations, applicable law of regulation, and the provisions of the
10 article. We removed the safety net for first line supervisors who denied
11 telework.

12 Before, they were protected from not being grieved, but now
13 the denial is grievable at step A. We added timeliness goals on telework
14 applications for requests of three days telework, or less per week, the agency
15 has 15 days, and for more than three days, the agency has 30. We expanded
16 the potential for special circumstances telework to be greater than six months.
17 We clarified the provisions regarding weather and safety leave.

18 Full time teleworkers can use weather and safety leave
19 should the need arise. We made sure the bargaining team was well
20 represented to negotiate regional issues. We had three regional
21 representatives on the bargaining team, along with two headquarters
22 representatives, a note taker, and two representatives from our NTEU national
23 office. Among the things we gained for the regions was the agency's
24 agreement that they will provide the chapter with an enclosed office at any
25 region where the agency has notified NTEU that it is eliminating private office
26 spaces for NRC employees.

1 We are currently bargaining reentry, which includes the
2 vaccine mandate impact and implementation. So far, we have agreed on a
3 parking memorandum of understanding, but that is all we have agreed on so
4 far. I would like to rely on my team, because I'm going to say that NTEU
5 respectfully does not agree that it's time to return. I was very saddened
6 yesterday to hear of Colin Powell's death from COVID, as he is fully
7 vaccinated.

8 We are not seeing many employees excited about coming
9 back, but we are seeing much fear, and anxiety, and I will let you know NTEU
10 is also here for you. We are a resource, come to us, we are here to help.
11 As I said, the only thing we've agreed on thus far in our reentry bargaining is
12 the parking MOU. But I would like to read a brief email when we submitted
13 our last reentry proposal to the agency, this email was written by our national
14 field rep, who is an attorney, and I would just like to rely on her words to let
15 you know NTEU's position.

16 So, we've attached the counter offer to the reentry MOU.
17 The chapter wants to emphasize to the agency, the importance of allowing
18 employees to remain on full time telework during the pandemic. There are
19 still significant health risks with contracting COVID, even if the employee is
20 vaccinated, and the D.C. area is still under a mask mandate. Although the
21 agency has asserted it believes that it's safe to return to work, the chapter
22 disagrees that this is the case.

23 As we have not seen any evidence of mass indoor
24 gatherings being safe, even for vaccinated people. Furthermore, being
25 ordered back into the physical workplace is a source of significant employee
26 concern, and lack of morale. And the chapters heard nothing but extreme

1 concern from employees who are being told they have to return in person to
2 work. Although the chapter understands that there is a reentry date, they
3 would like again to assert that agencies comparable to NRC are not planning
4 to bring back employees into the workplace, and the Safer Federal Workplace
5 Task Force has emphasized liberal use of telework to cope with the pandemic.

6 As I said, we are not really seeing employees that are
7 excited about coming to work, we are really seeing a lot of fear, and anxiety,
8 and NTEU respectfully asserts that office coverage can be done in the office,
9 or remotely. I believe that I'm covering the union office better, sometimes
10 24/7. I mean I believe I'm covering the office better in this environment than
11 I was when I was in the office, and someone would come down, and they were
12 upset, and they had a problem, and I was in a meeting, and I couldn't get back
13 to them until I got back in an hour, or whatever from the meeting.

14 Now, I can send an email, and say calm down, breathe, or
15 a text, it's not as bad, we've seen this before, we got you, we'll give you a great
16 steward. I mean I, we respectfully do believe that you can either -- granted,
17 some employees do not have jobs that are fully portable, and at some point
18 they will have to acknowledge that they will have to be in the office. But we
19 do not think that this is the point. So, on that note, NTEU is preparing, and
20 helping employees with their telework packages.

21 We are suggesting for employees that are seeking the six
22 months of full-time special circumstances telework post reentry date, we are
23 actually suggesting that employees also, there's nothing to prevent you from
24 doing this, also submit an additional telework request as a safety net. I would
25 like to give a big shout out, and my eternal gratitude to Josh Kaizer, who is a
26 steward, who has taken on the initial initiative, and we are here to help you,

1 so reach out to us if you are feeling that you need the help.

2 Okay, so finally, because a lot of employees have asked me
3 this, so I felt like I needed to put it out here, with respect to the approval, which
4 for this period of time, the six months post reentry, the approval level for the
5 special circumstances telework has been delegated down to the office
6 director, or the regional administrators. Employees have asked me about
7 HIPAA, because they've been requested to provide the medical
8 documentation for the special circumstances, because it has to be due to
9 personal incapacitation, or a hardship.

10 So, they are saying can the agency require me to submit
11 this information to my office director, or regional administrator, isn't that
12 against HIPAA? And what I would like to clarify, that HIPAA does not apply to
13 employers. But the agency can only share your information with those who
14 need to know, and in this case, that would be the approver. And so if your
15 office director is going to approve, then they do have a need to know. So,
16 yes, they can in fact ask you to submit that.

17 But there has to be a balance between a safe workplace,
18 but your privacy. Your privacy will be protected, but the decision maker does
19 need to know that, and they will be, and they can ask that. So, in conclusion
20 I would like to thank our team, our stewards work hard every day, our labor
21 partners work hard every day. NTEU is here for all of our 1800 plus
22 bargaining unit employees.

23 Come to us if you need help with anything. Also, a
24 shameless plug, if you think that we can be doing something better, please
25 jump in, tell us your better idea. Offer to help us, we would love to have more
26 help. But I do thank the bargaining unit employees for their support, it's been

1 a really challenging couple months for our team. I thank you all for the
2 support, and the encouragement that you've shown the whole NTEU team,
3 including me, but I really appreciate you all, and thank you for allowing me to
4 speak, and being gracious that I hadn't prepared my remarks. Have a great
5 day you all.

6 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you Sheryl, very, very much
7 for those remarks. I couldn't tell that they weren't prepared. So, with that,
8 I'd like to start with thank yous, and I'll end with them as well. Thanks to Dan,
9 and the EDO team, congratulations again on your appointment. Thanks to
10 Kathleen, and Justin in the room here, our question readers. Thank you very,
11 very much to the workforce. The Safe Workplace team Mark Lombard, Mary,
12 and Marian Zobler, Darrell Roberts, so many others, thanks again to OCIO,
13 Amin that are facilitating our transition, and have really made it possible for us
14 to do as much remotely as we've been able to do.

15 Thank you to all of the employees at the NRC for your
16 flexibility, your professionalism, and your integrity during what have really
17 been pretty trying times. And finally, thanks again to my colleagues. With
18 that, we're adjourned.

19 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record
20 at 12:00 p.m.)

21