UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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38TH REGULATORY INFORMATION CONFERENCE (RIC)

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COMMISSIONER DAVID A. WRIGHT PLENARY

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TUESDAY,

MARCH 10, 2026

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The Plenary Session convened at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, 5701 Marinelli Road, Rockville, Maryland and via videoconference, at 9:00 a.m. EDT, the Honorable David A. Wright, Commissioner, presiding.

PRESENT:

DAVID A. WRIGHT, Commissioner, Nuclear Regulatory Commission

JOHN TAPPERT, Director, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research, NRC

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

10:31 a.m.

(Video played.)

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome to the stage Commissioner David Wright.

COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: I feel really short. Well, thank you very much for the applause and the welcome. Good morning, everyone, and thank you for being here. I'd like to add my personal welcome to each of you for attending the 2026 version of the NRC's Regulatory Information Conference. It's going to be a great week.

You know, I believe the NRC is becoming the place for the cool kids on the nuclear block to work. By that, I mean we're not the same old NRC. We're a new NRC. The place to work if you want to be a part of enabling a nuclear future. I hope you enjoyed the Dave dreaming video. Its purpose was to remind me of the events in my life that have influenced my path and helped me during my year as chairman.

As always, a big thank you to Leon and Kyle and Kevin from A/V for your help in making my

initial idea and draft script come to life. You know, we really do have a lot of fun making the videos for you each year. Those guys are a very talented group, and they're the ones in the back smiling right now. So thank you again, fellas.

The organizers and the staff behind everything RIC this week have worked incredibly hard to make this a seamless event for you, and a huge thank you to each of them. And while I'm at it, to all the security personnel, thank you for keeping us safe this week. I know I'm not the easiest guy to keep up with. I move fast, and I can disappear pretty quickly.

In fact, I believe last year my code name was Running Back because I've been known to break through your defenses from time to time. All of the security personnel do a great job for us, so when you get a moment, thank them for the work that they do. In fact, if you don't mind, let's give the RIC organizers and the security personnel a round of applause right now. Thank you so much.

So looking around to my left over here, I see some former commissioners I'd like to welcome. Jeff Merrifield, I've seen him, Steve Burns, Bill

Ostendorff, George Apostolakis, Bill Magwood, Jeff Baran, I saw Annie Caputo. And I also see from DOE Ted Garrish. He's the Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy at DOE, and he's been a longtime friend and mentor of mine. So welcome. Welcome to each of you, and thank you for coming.

Now before I proceed any further, let me address my year as chairman for a moment. 2025 was a year of dynamic change for the NRC, and it was an honor to serve as chairman at such a pivotal moment in the agency's history. I want to thank the employees of the NRC for the faith and support you've shown me during my tenure here, especially last year, and for the support you continue to provide.

Each and every day, I saw the dedication, professionalism, and resilience of the NRC workforce in action. We were called to do many challenging things, some that took us all out of our comfort zone, but you did it, and we did it. I also want to thank Commissioner Crowell and Marzano for their individual help last year. What you did was important and much appreciated.

I'd also like to thank Mike King, the NRC's Executive Director of Operations, for his

efforts on the staff side of the NRC and for performing in several roles, too. I believe we worked well together, Mike. And by the way, not only do we need to go out and get wings soon, I do appreciate you wearing the Clemson tie today.

On January 8th, while I was taking the Metro downtown, I learned that President Trump had appointed Ho Nieh as Chairman of the NRC. When I arrived to where I was going, I called Ho and congratulated him on becoming the 20th Chairman of the NRC and told him that I looked forward to working with him and supporting him as we continue to move the agency forward.

Let me also take this moment to thank President Trump for the opportunity to serve as Chairman last year and for the message delivered to me during the phone call and via email from the White House on his behalf in announcing Ho's appointment, recognizing me for my service as Chairman during what was a crucial period of transition, overseeing the important and difficult task of implementing Executive Order 14300, which ordered the wholesale revision of the NRC's regulations and a reform of its culture and structure.

In doing so, even as the composition of the Commission itself significantly changed. That was really nice. It was necessary for the NRC to evolve and be effective in a world that is moving faster, innovating more rapidly, and demanding more from nuclear energy than in any point in recent decades. Maintaining excellence demands evolution. And last year, we evolved. We changed our culture. We turned the ship. And I am proud of what we accomplished, including many firsts. I'll speak to some of those in a few minutes.

In addition to thanking the President for the recognition, I also want to thank him for nominating me three times to the Commission over his two administrations and for appointing me Chairman twice, actually, in 2025. The Commission itself, as you know, went through some turmoil last year. Two commissioners left, and my second term expired on June 30th before I was confirmed by the U.S. Senate for a third term. Meaning I had to roll off the Commission myself.

The bad news, I had to pack up everything and literally move off the premises. The good news, fortunately, I was confirmed for a new five-year term

on July 27th, and I got to come back. I'm very grateful for that. Mr. President, we're yet to meet each other, something that I hope you will give me the opportunity to do in 2026 so that I can thank you in person. I will set that as a personal goal.

Now, Mr. Chairman, congratulations on completing your first official plenary, although being on stage at the RIC is not really anything new for you, but you did a great job. I'd also like to thank Secretary of Energy Chris Wright for his video remarks this morning. I've enjoyed traveling with the Secretary over the last year. And, Mr. Secretary, we'll miss you cuz, I mean, Mr. Secretary.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, the ADVANCE Act and the Executive Order 14300 directed the NRC to modernize how we fulfill our mission, to be risk-informed, efficient, predictable, and forward-looking while being resolute in our commitment to upholding safety.

Our journey to becoming a new NRC is well underway, and we recognize that we sit at the center of nuclear energy in this country and abroad. We know all the eyes are on us at the NRC. The stakes are high, and decisions made here matter. What had

to change and what has changed is how we carry out that mission in a world of accelerating innovation and increasing expectations.

We set the stage early last year with the creation and adoption of our new mission statement, and we will not abandon our principles or our commitment to safety, but instead reaffirm them in a modern context. Mr. Chairman, 2025 was a year of profound change at the NRC, and I have no doubt that under your leadership and with the support of our fellow colleagues, the NRC will continue to confidently move forward in 2026.

Speaking of our fellow colleagues, we have a full commission again, and that's a really good thing. To you, Mr. Chairman, to Commissioner Brad Crowell, Commissioner Matt Marzano, and Commissioner Doug Weaver, our newest addition who was also voted out of committee last week for a new five-year term beginning July 1st, congratulations. Thank each of you for your willingness to serve this country and for your sacrifice and the sacrifices of your families, too, in order to do this job.

I look forward to working closely with each of you to advance our mission, strengthen this

remarkable agency, and continue to make great things happen at the NRC. In addition, and on behalf of my team, Team Wright, I want to thank each of your staff members for the way they work and communicate with our office to advance the agency's mission each and every day.

And speaking of Team Wright, my team, the best team in federal government, thank you for all you do in support of me, the NRC, the American people, and in support of each other. Charles Kreuzberger, Kim Lora, Champa Rajapakse, Mandy Mauer, Jacki Storch, Jonathan Marcano, Travis Jones, Mike Benson, and Kevin Coyne, you all are simply the best, and it's an honor to work with each one of you.

I have a special thank you to Suzanne Dennis for leading Team Wright last year and to Jill Shepherd and Jim O'Driscoll for their work last year as well. And by the way, Commissioner Weaver, we missed Joelysa McLeod too, and she's in your office now.

Now, it wouldn't be a RIC plenary without me giving a quick family update. This year is a rare RIC for me because none of my children are expecting or have had -- given birth to a new grandchild in the

past year, and that's okay. That's okay. They're way too busy keeping up with the little ones anyway.

My mother, who will be 95 in July, is the longest living person in her family's history and the longest living on the Wright side too. Her parents gave her, her brothers and sisters, some amazing genes for living long lives, genes I hope she's passed on to me and my sister too. Mom had a hard few weeks back in between Thanksgiving and Christmas. In fact, she gave us a really good scare, but she's a true fighter and she's recovering well now. I will tell you that she's one tough cookie, one tough cookie.

My newest granddaughter, Hadley Mae Wright, a gift from God to my youngest son, Andrew, and his wife, Morgan, just over a year ago, is the youngest addition to our family. She's quite smart and she walked at eight months. I told my son she won't sit down again until he buys her a car.

Those two blessings of our family -- on our family, of my mom and of Hadley Mae, allowed me the opportunity to take this picture of the oldest and youngest living Wrights at Hadley Mae's first birthday party last month. I have no doubt that this picture and others like it will become even more

meaningful to our family in the years to come too.

My oldest son, Austin, his wife, Christine, and their two children, Hank and Nellie, are living their best life in Little Rock, Arkansas. They finished a big outdoor kitchen and deck remodel recently so that they could entertain a lot more than they had been able to, which they did when Papa visited them the week before Christmas.

My oldest daughter, Kimberly, who, like me, is a colon cancer survivor, continues to teach kindergarten and educate the future leaders of the community. Aunt Berly, as she is known, is the best aunt any niece or nephew could ask for too. Last month brought homes in South Carolina some very cold temperatures and a rare six to eight inches of snow. And as most teachers are, Kimberly and her crew were very well prepared.

Talking about having to be prepared for anything. Oh my gosh. My youngest daughter, Courtney, and her husband, Bucky, they're the parents of the majority of my grandchildren, Addison, Ty, Hannah, and the twins, Caroline and Wyatt. One thing's for sure, something is always happening at the Hudson household. And speaking of the twins, you

may remember when they were born right before the RIC seven years ago. They're a busy pair today and involved in everything. They love dance, soccer, and especially after school with Aunt Berly. They don't miss many opportunities either.

Recently, a group of monks embarked on a walk for peace pilgrimage on foot from Texas to Washington, DC. They drew thousands of people in every town they walked through along the way until they finally arrived at their destination here in Washington, DC right before Valentine's Day. This picture was taken about six weeks ago when the monks, along with a dog named Loca, who joined the monks on their walk shortly after they crossed the border at the Texas line. They walked through my hometown in South Carolina on their way up here.

More precisely, their route took them to within a block of where the twins lived. So Caroline and Wyatt came out to support them and one of the monks stopped and gave each one of them a flower. How cool is that?

I get a lot of strength from my family. Because of them and through them, my purpose is more defined and my resolve greater. I believe it's

important to be reminded of who you are and where you came from. Reminded of the milestones and markers in your life that helped shape you and prepare you. Remembering those things can help bring you through difficult times and challenges we all certainly will face and can help re-engage you with the strength and confidence you may have forgotten was already within you.

As I mentioned earlier, I drew on lessons from my own life this past year. Times when I had to learn and practice real patience. Times when I had to put in the work and the time in order to get a little stronger or a little faster. Times when I had to confront life and death challenges and make difficult decisions quickly. Times when I had to rely on God's grace and the help of others in an effort just to stay alive and help my daughter stay alive.

For me, 50 years of umpiring the game of baseball, my years of running long distance at Clemson University and my daughter Kimberly and my battles against colon cancer showed and taught me things about myself that I did not know were in my DNA. Being a baseball umpire isn't for the timid,

especially when you're behind the plate with 90 mile an hour fastballs coming at you. I did some simple math once on how many games I may have called in 50 years.

I mean being conservative, calling just eight games a week for only 13 weeks a year over 50 years easily gets you to 5,000 games. And if in each of those games I made half of the people happy, well, that was a good night. I learned how to be comfortable making tough but fair calls in real time and performing under scrutiny too with parents usually sitting directly behind the fence at home plate helping me, if you know what I mean. Some of those parents thought they were pretty good too.

Baseball umpires are at their best when they're invisible, letting the game happen without making themselves part of the game. Good baseball umpires follow a three-step process, three simple words, pause, read, and react. When a baseball is put into play, good umpires get into the proper position and they pause. And by that I mean they watch as the play unfolds before them. Then they read what they saw, and next they react and they sell what they saw by making a loud forceful call, leaving

no doubt as to what they saw. It was through baseball that I learned what makes a good team.

Baseball consists of two teams, nine players each, playing against each other on offense and defense. Each of the nine players plays a different position on the field and they need to know what their individual responsibility is in any given situation. Not all teams do that well. Players on a good team, they know their individual positions and know their individual responsibilities almost instinctively before a ball is hit to them or to a teammate, regardless of the situation.

Players on a good team seem to move in harmony with each other in a natural rhythm when they're making a play on a batted ball. And when that happens, man, baseball is a beautiful game to watch. Trying moments challenge us and they shape us. They test our judgment, strengthen our resilience, and sharpen our ability to act with clarity under pressure. They provide us with opportunities to grow, too. Those experiences become stepping stones preparing us not just to face future challenges, but to meet all of them with greater assurance when it matters most.

My first week as a student at Clemson University, just months after I had graduated from high school, I had a boneheaded idea to try out for the Tigers cross-country team. I ran only a little more than a year while I was in high school, which isn't that much, really, although I did have some success. Even so, I wasn't recruited by any college or university at all.

When I got to Clemson, there were seven or eight scholarship long-distance runners already on the roster, and 20 other guys that were like me. They were going to go after the same thing I was, one of the four remaining spots on the team. I didn't know if I should try out, if I'd be seriously looked at or considered at all, or if I could actually make the team. What I did have, though, was heart, the will to give it everything I had. And looking back, probably a touch of stupidity, too.

The training during that month-long tryout period was harder than anything I'd ever experienced before. Two-a-day workouts, 6 to 8 miles at 5:45 in the morning, and then 10 to 14 miles of training in the afternoon, sometimes split up in combinations of half-miles or mile repeats or

two-mile repeats, or repeat 400 meters until you felt so bad you couldn't eat afterwards.

Long story short, I made the team. I even made the seven-man traveling squad, too. What that experience taught me has served me well in my life because I learned about pain and how to push through it. I learned about how to manage my body and how to recover and heal. I learned what my physical limits were and what my body responded to best to help me improve. Most importantly, I learned to never give up or quit. I will never forget what I went through or what those years have meant to me in my life.

You know, as you saw me being reminded of in the Dave dreaming video, colon cancer is another significant marker in my life, twice, as a matter of fact. And by that I mean for me and as the dad of a daughter who faced it.

What I learned through my running experience at Clemson helped me when I went through surgery and chemotherapy for colon cancer, especially in managing and pushing through pain, knowing my limits, and never giving in, giving up, or quitting. Just like I observed in baseball, good teams work

seamlessly together as one team.

In my fight against colon cancer, I needed a great team of doctors and surgeons, oncologists, nurses, caregivers, and prayer warriors, all working together seamlessly for me, and then for my daughter after me. I had to put together a team quickly, one that I could trust to work together, one that would communicate often, and one where each member of the team was focused on the same goal.

They provided me the comfort and the confidence I needed in that moment to fight, and they provided my daughter the same. We will all face uncertainties, difficulties, and personal trials, including having to face our fears. And because uncertainties, difficulties, trials, and fears never, ever go away, we have to learn how to deal with them, to not be afraid to take them on, and to do something about them.

Whatever your sources of strength are, God, family, friends, whatever it may be, when times are difficult, you need to call on those sources and rely on them. And if you need it, don't be afraid to ask others for help too.

For me, personally, I'm a man of faith,

and I know I'm never alone, never. I don't just believe, I know God's got my back. I've experienced it, and I'm confident that he's prepared the path ahead of me. That belief helps make what might be unbearable bearable for me, and what might be uncomfortable comfortable.

In addition to my family, I also draw strength and confidence from you, my NRC family. Throughout the past year, I often found myself reflecting on the moment we were in at the NRC and the path that brought us where we were. There was plenty of fear and uncertainty inside the NRC last year. The agency faced record-high attrition with significant losses across mission-critical disciplines at all levels, including senior leadership.

As a result, succession planning went out the window, right? Workforce pressures grew as rising demand for specialized technical expertise increased from outside of the agency. Many retirement-eligible employees opted to retire, and the need to train staff to review new or novel technologies alongside established systems grew.

Although the agency suffered losses, the

NRC did not lose its way or the ability to perform its mission. Instead, everyone stepped up. Everyone. Employees with decades of service stepped up, taking on new roles and new responsibilities. Employees with less run time at the agency rose to the occasion, forging their own path, and began creating their own legacy. You turned the ship. And you should take pride in what you accomplished too.

So just how did a nuclear safety regulator meet the moment, modernizing at the pace of innovation while remaining committed to following its north star, safety, our strike zone over home plate?

Well, again, you leaned in, you rolled up your sleeves, and asked some difficult questions about our processes, our structures, and our culture. You assessed whether systems designed for a different era were still serving today's needs. And you did it with confidence and conviction. You focused on modernizing licensing frameworks to better accommodate advanced technologies.

You focused on improving regulatory predictability and transparency, and enhancing coordination, both internally and with our federal partners, and with our international counterparts.

You should take pride in what you accomplished, because this evolution empowered and energized the agency to achieve some remarkable accomplishments. Here are just a few.

In the area of materials, you completed more than 100 licensing actions, covering facilities, new fuels, and storage and transportation. The NRC also conducted over 150 inspections across fuel facilities, storage sites, and transport operations. Specifically for new fuels, the NRC approved six fuel facility and four transportation applications. The agency streamlined oversight for advanced fuels, including HALEU, and are actively engaging with applicants, preparing for fuel cycle licensing, and we continue updating guidance to match new designs and enrichment levels.

Staff issued a first-of-a-kind license for DISA Technologies. In just six months, half the usual review time for a groundbreaking uranium mine waste remediation technology, which addressed a priority for Congress, tribes, and other stakeholders. In the reactor arena, the NRC accelerated licensing for advanced small modular and micro-reactors, achieving milestones, such as

NuScale's early standard design approval, fee reductions for micro-reactors, expedited timeline reviews, and extended design certification from 15 to 40 years.

The agency also approved the restart of the Palisades Nuclear Plant, a historic first, and we completed several early plant service life extensions as well as numerous plant power uprate applications. And Ho earlier mentioned some others, like TerraPower and Part 53.

On the fusion front, the NRC is developing a technology-inclusive framework to position the U.S. as a leader in this emerging field. You got some important things done on the mission support side of the agency too. The agency established a new qualification program governance framework that standardizes how qualifications are developed and overseen, improving the consistency, transparency, and accountability of NRC training programs while ensuring agency-wide operational needs are fully supported.

We are underscoring our commitment to be a partner in progress in some pretty unique ways too. For example, the agency is collaborating with NASA in

support of its initiative to develop and deploy a nuclear fission power system on the moon by 2030. By working to strengthen the nuclear supply chain, expanding opportunities for small businesses while advancing the NRC's mission to enable the safe and secure use of nuclear technology.

And in less than a month, the agency will deploy NEXUS, an agency-wide system that streamlines workforce and project management, strengthens strategic workforce planning, optimizes resources, and boosts coordination across the NRC. Most impressively, you accomplished all of this even as we navigate a nuclear energy landscape that is changing faster than ever. I know I speak for my colleagues when I express how proud I am of what the agency achieved during the past year, and you should be proud too.

As I stand before you this morning, I remain inspired by you, the employees of the NRC, whose dedication made these successes possible. I got to tell you, though, believe it or not, this is just the beginning. More opportunities lie ahead. Expectations will remain high. The pace of change will not slow. Our regulatory approach must continue

to evolve, become more efficient, more responsive, and more agile.

But you're already demonstrating that you got this. You're ready for the future. And you also know that effective regulation is going to require strong collaboration with everyone. Collaboration with the Congress, collaboration with the White House on the goals of the administration, collaboration with the Department of Energy to advance research and safe deployment, collaboration with industry and other stakeholders to improve clarity and efficiency, and collaboration with our international counterparts to strengthen global safety standards.

When each institution fulfills its distinct role with professionalism and transparency, trust is built, and the entire nuclear enterprise becomes stronger. For industry, this partnership is about clarity, certainty, and reliability. For the public, it's about engagement and trust. For the NRC staff, it's about empowerment and purpose. For the NRC as an agency, it means staying true to our mission and making independent science-backed regulatory decisions.

Let me be clear about something, though.

Collaboration does not mean compromising our commitment to safety. Safety remains and will always be the core principle that anchors every decision we make. Safety and innovation are not opposing forces, though. They can and should move forward together. The NRC can and will be both a proponent of safety and a partner in progress.

Looking forward, I see a dynamic landscape full of promise, one that's moving fast and demands focus. And you, the employees of the NRC, you're already aware and planning for it. The NRC is anticipating a significant wave of new licensing activity for advanced reactors, new fuel cycle activities, and the expanded use of existing nuclear technologies.

Last I checked, there were 24 potential applicants in some form of early engagement with the NRC. That's a lot of potential future licensing work, and the NRC will be ready for it. On top of those 24, probably another 36 potential applicants who have not yet really formally engaged with the NRC. Together, that represents more than 60 potential applicants.

Now, regardless of if they all

materialize or not, it's still an exciting time to work at the NRC. The future is unfolding right before us, and the NRC stands ready to support whatever the future brings to us. We will not be the roadblock.

In addition, the NRC continues to advance our commitments under the ADVANCE Act and Executive Order 14300 with a comprehensive agency reorganization designed to focus our resources on top priorities, strengthen our technical capabilities, and boost the efficiency and agility of our workforce to meet emerging challenges.

These are substantial undertakings that will shape how we carry out our mission for years to come. And they are possible only because of the professionalism, expertise, and commitment of you our dedicated employees. You continue to deliver on core responsibilities, even as you've had to integrate the work of change itself. You have the experience of the last 50 years to guide you too.

As a commissioner who cares about the people of the NRC, I admire the support you have for each other and the passion you have for what you do. That's why I've never, never doubted the NRC's

ability to rise to meet the moment. So don't doubt yourself either. Don't doubt your ability or your value to this great agency, and don't be afraid of tomorrow. Instead, embrace what tomorrow can be and what you can help make it be.

You have the skill sets needed to keep the NRC on the right path. You have the expertise needed to move the agency forward. You have what it takes to meet the moment. It's been there all along with you, and if you need proof, just look at what you accomplished last year. So don't fear, and don't worry about things you can't control. It will only stress you out.

Instead, take control and be in control of those things that you have the power and the ability to control. Focus on those things in your daily life and at work that make you invaluable to others. Trust yourself. Believe in yourself. If you do, good things and good outcomes will follow, and the future will take care of itself.

To my colleagues, the agency must invest in building a strong, future-ready workforce and thoughtfully redefine our organizational structure. Both efforts we are actively advancing right now.

Developing and sustaining our workforce is essential to the NRC's long-term success in fulfilling our mission, because our staff is the backbone of our agency. They are our greatest and most essential asset.

Their expertise continues to shape regulatory practices and standards that are recognized and respected around the world, and what has been accomplished by us as an agency is because of their dedication, professionalism, and commitment to our mission.

In fact, to meet our mission of enabling, advancing, and deploying nuclear technologies, we must strengthen recruitment and retention of our workforce, enhance training and knowledge transfer, and prioritize leadership development. It's essential that we build an agile, skilled workforce capable of meeting evolving challenges and sustaining technical excellence.

For the employees already working at the NRC, your work has never been more consequential. The last year asked a great deal of you, and you adapted and delivered. You adapted to new expectations, new processes, and new demands, often

while maintaining a full workload. Your professionalism, expertise, belief in our mission, and your commitment to public service are the foundation of the agency's credibility.

For those watching or listening this morning and considering a career in public service, there are few places in federal government where technical expertise and public purpose intersect so directly as they do here at the NRC. I encourage you to consider joining an organization recognized around the world for its rigor and integrity, working along some of the most accomplished subject matter experts anywhere in the world, and help shape the next chapter of nuclear energy here and abroad.

Now is the time to be part of the NRC. The people who make up this agency are amazing, and they are fast becoming the cool kids on the nuclear block. The responsibility entrusted to this agency has never been more visible or more consequential. Moments like this do not call for hesitation. They call for action, action to enable with a clarity of purpose, with transparency, with engagement, all while maintaining steadfastly to our core mission. That is who we are.

We are an agency grounded in expertise, strengthened by experience, committed to continuous improvement. We will continue to evolve where evolution is required. We will act with urgency where urgency is warranted, and we will do so without ever losing sight of the principle that defines us, safely enabling nuclear technologies. Safety will not follow progress either. It will lead it.

As nuclear energy starts its next chapter, the NRC will meet it head on with confidence and resolve. We are ready for the responsibility, ready for the pace, and ready for the work ahead. We will continue meeting the moment, and we will do so with safety leading the way. Thank you so much for your time and attention this morning.

MR. TAPPERT: Okay. Well, thank you, Commissioner, for those remarks. And I always enjoy seeing what you and the A/V folks can put together there, so. We don't have a lot of time left in this session, so let's try to hit a couple of questions here.

The first one I have is, you've been a big supporter of international programs. How is this important in the current energy landscape, and how

does it lead to achieving energy security and safety here and abroad?

COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes. Well, thank you. First off, our Office of International Programs does a remarkable job. They're very engaged. They're small. We need to help them grow because they can help us a lot. Today, we're in the whole-of-government approach for everything, right? And we work well. I've been on several. In fact, I'm leaving this weekend to go to Poland and Hungary. But I've been on whole-of-government things to Romania, to Kenya, and to Ghana, working with DOE, working with Commerce, working with State. And it works, and that's the message we need to be sending.

And so it's critically important, and it's important to our vendors, the people who are designing the systems that are coming through getting licensed now, right? That's why changing that from 15 to 40 on the design certification was so important. You've got AP1000. They're getting ready to come in for a change, which is good, and that'll be the one everybody builds. You've got NuScale. It's got their certification already. They can go to market. You've got others that, you know, are coming through

and starting. That wave is getting ready to start.

And it's important because if it's got the NRC seal of approval, the international community would like to use it, and I think that's -- for us, energy security is important, not just here but abroad.

MR. TAPPERT: Okay. Thank you for that. And in your speech, you referred to a new NRC and it being the cool kid on the nuclear block. Can you elaborate on that?

COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yeah. I mean, look what happened during, you know, last year. You know, everything happens for a reason. There is nothing that just -- there's a purpose behind everything. So, I'm one that always looks at the silver lining kind of things. You want to look at the positive in everything because the negative will do nothing but drive you nuts.

So, our people, you know, we had people leave. It was a perfect storm of opportunity for many of them, right? And I don't fault them at all. But the people who stayed are passionate for the mission here. They're here because they love the mission of this agency and they love the NRC and

they're dedicated to what they do.

We had people like Mike King who had opportunities hitting a lot faster than maybe he thought was going to be coming in his life. But then we had others who were behind him, you know, who had less run time at the agency, who have -- seriously, they stepped up in a big way, which is then going to open opportunity for others to join this fine -- I mean, this is a great agency.

And so that's what I mean by now we're the cool kids, you know. We're the ones that can shape the future. You can't do it unless you're part of the NRC. So, if you're looking to make that kind of hay, come here. This is the place to be.

MR. TAPPERT: Okay. Well, great recruiting pitch. I think that's a good place to end it. And thank you again.

COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Thank you so much.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 11:18 a.m.)