

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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ALL EMPLOYEES MEETING

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TUESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 29, 2026

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The Commission met in the TWFN Auditorium, at 9:30 a.m.
EDT, Ho K. Nieh, Chairman, presiding.

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

HO K. NIEH, Chairman

BRADLEY R. CROWELL, Commissioner

MATTHEW J. MARZANO, Commissioner

DAVID A. WRIGHT, Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT:

MIKE KING, Executive Director for Operations

NIK FLOYD, Senior Reactor Inspector, Region I,

Office of the Chief Nuclear Reactor Inspector

VICTOR HALL, Deputy Director, Office of

International Programs

MOLLY KEEFE-FORSYTH, Safety Culture Program Manager,

Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer

STEPHANIE MORROW, Human Factors Psychologist, Office

of Nuclear Regulatory Research

VERONICA RODRIGUEZ ALFONSO, Senior International

Relations Officer, Office of International

Programs

JUSTIN VAZQUEZ, Chief, National Regulator

Apprenticeship Network Program Branch

PATRICIA GLENN, Program Evaluator, Office of the

Executive Director for Operations

PROCEEDINGS

9:31 a.m.

1 <Video plays>

2 MR. KING: Wow, what a great way to start today's
3 meeting. It's truly impressive to hear those messages of appreciation from
4 our stakeholders. I hope you're as proud of those messages as I am.

5 So, good morning, everyone. I'm Mike King, the Executive
6 Director for Operations here at the NRC. And it's my pleasure to welcome
7 you to the NRC's 2026 All Employees Meeting with the Commission. Each
8 year this meeting provides an opportunity for agency staff to directly engage
9 with the entire Commission on topics of relevant interests.

10 I would like to welcome our employees here at
11 Headquarters, our colleagues joining us from the four Regional Offices online,
12 and the Technical Training Center in Chattanooga, and everyone participating
13 remotely.

14 Since this is a public meeting, I would also like to welcome
15 our federal and state partners, industry representatives, non-governmental
16 organizations, members of the media and the public, and everyone else
17 joining us today.

18 Before we get started, I would like to acknowledge that
19 Commissioner Weaver was, unfortunately, unable to join us today. He sent
20 his regrets and wishes he could be here with us for this important opportunity
21 to engage.

22 I would also like to thank the many people who have worked
23 behind the scenes to make today's meeting possible, particularly our
24 colleagues in the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer, the Office of the

1 Chief Information Officer, the Office of the Secretary, and the Office of the
2 Executive Director for Operations. Thank you for all your hard work.

3 When I think back to where we were at last year's meeting,
4 it's remarkable how much has changed and how much we've accomplished
5 together. Over the past year, our agency has undertaken one of the most
6 significant modernization efforts in its history. We've tackled longstanding
7 challenges and major licensing decisions and made substantial progress
8 modernizing our regulatory framework -- all while continuing to carry out our
9 essential safety and security mission.

10 Our efforts to implement Executive Order 14300 have
11 required extraordinary work across the agency. We've challenged ourselves
12 to rethink how we do business, strengthen collaboration, and find new ways
13 to be more efficient, effective, and risk-informed. And none of this happens
14 without you.

15 I want to take a moment to sincerely thank our employees
16 across the agency. I know the pace of change has been demanding. Many
17 of you have taken on additional responsibilities, worked through difficult
18 issues, and continued to deliver our mission while adapting to new
19 expectations. Your dedication, professionalism, and willingness to rise to the
20 challenges have made our progress possible.

21 We have a great deal to be proud of, but our work is far from
22 finished. As we move to the next phase of modernization, our focus is on
23 turning the challenges we've developed into -- the changes we've made into
24 lasting improvements in how we operate.

25 Our new management model, the Leadership, Excellence,
26 Accountability, and Discipline Framework, or LEAD Framework, is an

1 important part of that effort. It's about how we lead, make decisions, support
2 our employees, and work together to build a culture that enables us to
3 succeed.

4 Today's meeting is an opportunity to reflect on our progress,
5 recognize the tremendous work that has taken place across the agency, and
6 discuss the opportunities and challenges directly with the Commission.

7 Now, it's my pleasure to welcome Chairman Nieh to provide
8 some opening remarks.

9 Chairman, over to you.

10 (Applause.)

11 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Thank you, Mike.

12 Good morning, Team NRC. And I want to add my thank
13 you to every NRC employee for your dedication to our safety mission and your
14 commitment to public service while we are making major changes to enable
15 and accelerate the safe and secure deployment of nuclear technologies.

16 One message that I've been hearing over the last several
17 months consistently is that the NRC is no longer viewed as a problem for
18 nuclear energy in America. Our results are speaking for themselves -- from
19 the new rules we've published in The Federal Register to the credible,
20 predictable, and timely safety decisions that we've issued over the last year.

21 Just yesterday, we issued a construction permit for a
22 BWRX-300 at TVA's Clinch River site in Tennessee. That work was done in
23 14 months -- four months ahead of schedule.

24 The new NRC is clearly demonstrating that we are enabling
25 major American nuclear energy projects to move forward. It's incredible
26 work. I'm so proud of what you all are doing.

1 Since I've been back at the agency, I've retraced many
2 steps from my career here at the NRC -- from the Regions to Headquarters,
3 to the Technical Training Center. And doing so reminded me of how
4 important our work is and how awesome you all are in doing it.

5 I want every NRC employee to know that what you do
6 matters and what you do is making a difference. In every office, in every
7 program across the entire agency, your work is really important.

8 We are achieving our success because we're working better
9 together as one Team NRC. This means our reactor and materials
10 inspectors in the Regions, our license reviewers in Headquarters and in the
11 Regions, our rulemakers, our security and emergency preparedness
12 professionals, our research and training staff, our lawyers -- right? -- our
13 financial experts, our human resource specialists, our corporate and
14 administrative support folks -- all of you are contributing to the great work that
15 this agency is doing, and it's so important that you have to see yourself in this
16 mission.

17 And, of course, the Commission. I'm so honored to be
18 working alongside Commissioners Wright, Crowell, and Marzano, and the
19 empty CHAIRMAN for Commissioner Weaver. This Commission is
20 approaching its work with a strong dedication to our safety mission, rigor in
21 our reviews of your proposals, and collegiality, as we move this agency
22 forward.

23 We know that you are all working so hard right now -- long
24 hours, demanding schedules. The Commission, we appreciate your efforts.
25 We have one more push to make in finalizing these new rules that we've
26 prepared, and I know we can get it done. We can do this.

1 And I expect that the pace will ease up as we move deeper
2 into next year, especially as we bring more people onboard at the agency.
3 We've got this moment together.

4 I'm so proud of what you all are doing. And as the EDO
5 mentioned, our work is just beginning. As we move into next year, we are
6 going to be focusing on sustainable execution of these reforms.

7 Again, I'm really proud of the work this agency is doing.
8 You are an incredible agency. You are a shining spot in the federal
9 government.

10 Now, we're going to do something a little bit different for this
11 All Hands Meeting. We're going to have each member of the Commission
12 that's here today have a chat with NRC staff members to talk about where we
13 are and where we're going -- with safety as our top priority.

14 So, I'm going to start things up with asking Mike King and
15 one of our Branch Chiefs, Justin Vazquez, to join me on stage here.

16 Great. Okay. Egg timer. There we go.

17 (Laughter.)

18 Okay. Well, Mike, amazing results that we've achieved
19 over the last year. I really appreciate your leadership over the agency's staff.
20 You have really stepped up and done incredible things with the leadership
21 team and aligning that team, developing the LEAD Framework, getting
22 credible, predictable licensing decisions done by the agency.

23 What do we need to do next to ensure that these reforms
24 are durable?

25 MR. KING: Yes, so that's a huge focus for us right now, as
26 the senior leadership team and leaders across the agency. We have made

1 such tremendous progress, as evidenced by the video and the overwhelming
2 support that we have seen from stakeholders.

3 You and I were both at the General Conference in Vienna
4 recently and the overwhelming feedback we've gotten there.

5 But it is important to make these changes sustainable, and
6 that's what the LEAD Framework is all about. And we recognize how
7 everybody is so busy right now. And so, a lot of the questions that we're
8 getting is, why spend so much time and effort on it? Why is this so important?

9 Our history of the agency, we've responded to many such
10 events as we've had recently. But what the LEAD Framework brings, and
11 why it's so important, is we need to get ourselves in a situation where we
12 detect early the need for us to make changes, and we go ahead and take
13 those actions without the need for Congress or the President to intervene, or
14 any other external stakeholders. We need to be in a situation where it's a
15 routine part of business for us to detect and determine early, with the need for
16 us to course correct.

17 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Yes, that's building that culture of
18 continuous improvement, so we can adapt on our own without having external
19 forces compel us to change.

20 So, you guys are doing a great job in getting feedback from
21 the workforce with the pulse surveys. I appreciate that you're sharing that
22 with the Commission, and I can see clearly that you're acting on that feedback
23 that you're getting from the staff through your communications and the things
24 that you're doing to adapt how we do business.

25 So, tell me, with the LEAD Framework, what's resonating
26 with the staff and what needs more work?

1 MR. KING: Well, I think the strongest thing that resonates
2 with the staff is that the LEAD Framework is centered on our No. 1 focus,
3 which is safety and security. That's at the center of the LEAD Framework.
4 Our principle is a good regulation. Our core values aren't changing.

5 The piece that I think needs the most focus is helping the
6 staff across the agency understand all the new pieces of the LEAD Framework
7 and how they tie that to the day-to-day operations. And given how busy we
8 are today, it's important for us to just take bite-sized pieces of it at a time and
9 bake it into our day-to-day business.

10 Like, for example, the leadership team decided that we were
11 going to focus early-on on three primary areas.

12 One is debating with candor and delivering with unity.
13 We've made a number of changes to our Differing Views Program over the
14 years, how we debate issues. And it's important for us to focus on making it
15 clear that we are just as focused as ever on ensuring that we raise issues and
16 we debate them candidly with each other, but we need to be just as focused
17 on we deliver with unity. We move out on those decisions.

18 We're also focused primarily on identifying and resolving
19 issues. Really, how do we as an agency really focus on identifying issues,
20 owning those issues, and driving to resolution at every level of the
21 organization, and really empowering staff to make those decisions and use
22 their expert judgment and be risk-informed about it?

23 And then, finally, we call it "assuming positive
24 intent" -- amongst each other and amongst us and external stakeholders.
25 We're all marching in the same direction and we need to assume that out the
26 gate.

1 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Well, Mike, thank you for your efforts
2 here.

3 You know, I and my colleagues on the Commission are 100
4 percent behind the staff. We want this agency to be successful. This is
5 about the culture change and how we do business at the agency going
6 forward -- long after all of us have moved on to different roles and different
7 things that we would do in our careers. So, it has to last.

8 And I thank you for the work you're doing.

9 Justin, you are the Branch Chief over the Nuclear
10 Regulatory Apprenticeship Network Program. It's a great program where
11 we're really bringing in the future generation, the next generation of nuclear
12 regulators.

13 So, tell me, how is NRAN changing the way we develop our
14 people?

15 MR. VAZQUEZ: Well, the NRAN program, I mean, to build
16 off of our discussion of the LEAD Framework, if you're talking about small bites
17 that we take from day to day, I mean, we've got a huge chomp at the LEAD
18 Framework when we're talking about the NRAN Program, because we're all
19 about talent and professional leadership.

20 One of the big things with me with this kind of iteration of the
21 NRC's professional development strategy is that the NRAN Program really
22 develops a truly agile workforce, because our folks, through the program, they
23 come; they spend a core three months together learning about all the
24 regulatory fundamentals, all the technical fundamentals across reactor safety,
25 material safety, security, all of our important program areas.

26 And then, they take that knowledge and they get to go and

1 have an experience in three different areas of the agency. They get to spread
2 their wings and see a lot of different areas of nuclear regulation.

3 And with that, when they come out of the program, I mean,
4 our team, they're going to be able to fit in anywhere in the agency where we
5 have a need for technical expertise. And some of them will have particular
6 nuances that they'll get into. They'll dig in; they will become those long-term
7 subject matter experts.

8 But I mean, a lot of the folks in the agency, they are going
9 to wear a lot of different hats throughout their career and they're going to excel
10 and they're going to be really making sure that we are able to focus on the
11 important safety and technical fundamentals in any area that they're going to
12 be aboard, that they're going to be working that experience.

13 CHAIRMAN NIEH: That's great, Justin.

14 And recently, you were at the Technical Training Center
15 when I visited there several weeks ago. And I'm so impressed with the
16 technology we're using there and the dedication of the training staff at the
17 TTC.

18 Tell me, do you have any thoughts on how the TTC can help
19 us develop the next generation of regulators?

20 MR. VAZQUEZ: Oh, yes, absolutely. I mean, the TTC
21 has always been just such a core part of our training, not just for inspectors in
22 the field who, I mean, really rely on that for their main qualifications, but also
23 for qualifying licensing reviewers and other folks that carry that expertise into
24 rulemaking and other areas.

25 And the TTC has been, I mean, constantly evolving and
26 learning over the years. Years ago, they adopted the AP1000 simulator,

1 when that technology came to fruition. They actually have a new glasstop
2 panel that they can take to adapt to any technology design that we get a
3 simulation for.

4 And that's really going to be crucial with the future, as we
5 see advanced reactor technologies come to fruition, because they are going
6 to be able to adapt. They're going to be able to develop training modules that
7 will train on any technology, and that will really help to help our inspectors, our
8 licensors, anyone that is going to be a part of making this transition to
9 advanced nuclear technologies possible, and making sure that it is done safely
10 and securely. They're going to get that fundamental knowledge, and a crucial
11 part of that is going to be their experience at the TTC.

12 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Yes, that's great. You know, as a
13 former inspector, I had spent some time in TTC and their training programs.
14 And I think there's a huge opportunity for that organization, under the
15 leadership of Research, to perhaps expand its reach into other areas, like what
16 we do in licensing and other parts of our core business at the agency.

17 MR. VAZQUEZ: Absolutely.

18 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Okay. The final question, and it's
19 going to go to both of you. And you can start first, Justin, and I'll let Mike have
20 the time to think about it.

21 If every NRC employee did one thing differently tomorrow,
22 what would it be?

23 MR. VAZQUEZ: One thing differently tomorrow? Well, I
24 think that really moving forward for our agency, and for the state of the
25 excellence that we're building on the LEAD Framework, and through just
26 adapting to our renewed mission function, I think that, if there's one thing that

1 we could do, it's finding alignment early, on anything that we're working on, on
2 what our priority is; what the focus is.

3 When we're talking about setting high standards and really
4 thinking about what is our mission, I mean, Commissioner Wright is always
5 saying that safety is our north star. Safety will always be our north star, and
6 making sure that we are able to have alignment on what do we need to do to
7 focus on that safety mission, to do it in a way that serves the needs of our
8 diverse set of stakeholders.

9 Because I think one of our biggest lessons learned over the
10 past year and a half of growth that we've seen is that we've got a lot of vested
11 interests -- I mean, as we saw from the video -- that are looking at our agency
12 closely and really looking for us to lead the charge towards nuclear excellence
13 and maintaining the safety focus as we're enabling technologies.

14 And so, early alignment on what your priority is, what
15 standards you're being held to, what the priority should be. Because, I mean,
16 we've talked a lot about burnout, and I know that is a big thing, I mean, in my
17 previous roles as a supervisor, has been a challenge for staff.

18 But really, having that early understanding as to what it is
19 that should be your primary focus, what should be the thing that you wake up
20 and already kind of take charge on, that's going to help us to make sure that
21 we are devoting our energies to the places that are going to be most crucial
22 to achieving our mission, while then being able to have reserves to take care
23 of all the little day-to-day things that we need to do, but keeping the true
24 focuses onboard. And early alignment, early communications, that is what is
25 key to making that possible, with allowing us to continue to excel excellently
26 together as one organization.

1 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Mike, what do you think?

2 MR. KING: I'd say just really asking themselves every day,
3 am I rowing the boat in the right direction? And own it. You know, if you see
4 that you are spending time on something that doesn't matter, raise your hand;
5 you know, elevate the issue. Let's move on.

6 If you are in a position where you need to exercise your own
7 engineering judgment, and you're being faced with a decision, apply your
8 engineering judgment. Talk to your supervisor. You know, this is about us
9 making sure we are going ahead and moving out now.

10 And so, you know, continually ask yourself, am I really
11 rowing in the right direction? Are we making progress? If not, figure out a
12 way to row and sync with everybody.

13 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Yes, well, Mike and Justin, thank you
14 so much for your leadership at the agency. I really appreciate what you're
15 doing in setting the standards and putting in place a discipline management
16 model for the agency, and your work, Justin, in developing the next generation
17 of leaders.

18 This is incredible work that is happening at the agency.
19 Our focus moving into the next years will be sustaining the excellence in our
20 performance, as we implement the regulatory reforms that all of you have
21 contributed to.

22 So, thank you so much, and I think I'm going to turn it over
23 to Patricia for the next Commissioner.

24 MS. GLENN: Outstanding. Let's give them a round of
25 applause.

26 (Applause.)

1 Outstanding. Thank you. Thank you.

2 So, we are welcoming our next fireside chat. As you all can
3 see, it's with Commissioner Wright, and also, with Vic Hall and Veronica
4 Rodriguez Alfonso.

5 We welcome you all to the stage.

6 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Good morning.

7 Can you hear me out here? Let's try it now. Are we good?

8 All right.

9 Well, good morning, everyone. It's great to see all of you.
10 It's great to be back in the U.S.

11 I'm here this morning with Vic Hall and Veronica Rodriguez.

12 Vic, you're taking over as Director of the Office of
13 International Programs.

14 And Veronica is one of the OIP desk officers, but she is more
15 than just one of the officers. They're all fabulous.

16 So, thank you both for joining me.

17 So, I'm excited to use this time together -- and it's only 10
18 minutes; it's going to go very fast -- to share some of the information with the
19 agency about what OIP does.

20 But before we get started -- and I don't know if he's in the
21 room or not, but Dave Skeen? He's here? He's over there, yes, yes.

22 (Applause.)

23 So, thank you.

24 Dave had 35 years with the agency, the last four -- almost
25 four years -- as Director of OIP. He's an amazing person to work with, to
26 travel with. He has accomplished a lot of extraordinary things here.

1 And, Dave, you're going to be missed, but I wanted to
2 recognize you, and let everyone here recognize him one more time.

3 (Applause.)

4 So, thank you.

5 With that, Vic?

6 For those who may not be familiar with the work that your
7 office does, give us kind of a high-level snapshot of what OIP is and what it is
8 that you do. And now that you're new, you have got to make it in your image
9 as well.

10 MR. HALL: Yeah, no pressure, right?

11 (Laughter.)

12 I'm standing on the shoulders of a giant. And Dave is
13 literally 6-foot-24, I think is the actual height, yes.

14 (Laughter.)

15 And thank you, Commissioner, for having us. Your kind of
16 warmth and generosity towards the staff is a thing of legends. And we are
17 hearing stories of your first day walking around patting folks on the back. So,
18 it's an honor to have you represented here.

19 And I appreciate the opportunity to talk about the great work
20 that our folks do. I'm going to channel Jen Holzman, who is in Vienna right
21 now, our wonderful senior advisor. I'm not going to do her justice, but she
22 tells a wonderful history of the NRC's growth from AEA and this country's
23 commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, among many treaties
24 and conventions.

25 And she describes the work that not just OIP does, but the
26 agency does -- and it's everyday work -- to meet our commitments globally for

1 the peaceful use of nuclear power. And you think about it: it's our licensing
2 framework; it's our inspection programs. It's everything we do for safety,
3 security, safeguards, and the legal work that we do to back it up, that supports
4 this country's commitment to the world for peaceful use of nuclear power.
5 And the way she describes it is just absolutely beautiful. And it talks
6 about -- again, it's all the work the entire staff does.

7 And so, in OIP, I feel like we stand on the shoulders of giants
8 at this agency of this great work that we do. What that means in practice for
9 OIP is we have a group of international assistance folks, our desk officers,
10 who are kind of the stars of the office. They understand the geopolitics, the
11 regulatory side of it, the technical side of it, and they bring it all together to
12 provide support for the entire agency.

13 A little-known fact is we also control the small piece of import
14 and export licensing. So, we have a branch that is responsible for every
15 export of nuclear materials and components that leave this country. That is
16 licensed by our group in International Programs.

17 And then, we have a fantastic team. It supports all the
18 travel, whether it's visas, whether it's passports. We have a "LOCA policy" of
19 "no loss of Commissioner accidents." So, we will not lose a Commissioner
20 on any travel. It's a commitment to all of our Commissioners.

21 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Challenge accepted.

22 MR. HALL: Yeah.

23 (Laughter.)

24 So, we have that wonderful team that supports all the travel
25 that we do across the board. So, it's a fantastic team that, again, stands on
26 the shoulders of giants for this great agency that does wonderful work for our

1 Nation.

2 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes, thank you for that
3 outline. And I think it's important for the people in the room to know, and
4 people listening online, that everything that you're doing is in line with the
5 ADVANCE Act and the goals that they have set going forward as well,
6 although, right now, we haven't maybe provided you with everything that you
7 could use, and we can talk about that.

8 But you've only been here a few months. What has
9 surprised you most?

10 MR. HALL: So, you know, it is a small team, but I think
11 what surprised me most is the breadth of the impact. And again, I knew we
12 were looked at by the world.

13 And you saw a wonderful video of Mike Finnerty from the
14 UK and you had Pierre Tremblay from Canada, some of our wonderful
15 English-speaking partners on the globe. And you expect them to listen to us,
16 to be partners.

17 But what surprised me was the genuine impact that we have
18 on the globe. And so, when you hear Mike and the Chairman talk about the
19 LEAD Framework, and not only the technical expertise, but how we do what
20 we do, people across the globe are listening from every single corner of the
21 globe. So, it is how we're doing business that is having an impact globally.

22 And we talk about just the impact that the nuclear sector is
23 having across the globe. Us being able to enable that technology safely, and
24 how we do that, is the biggest thing. That, I will say, did not surprise me,
25 but that was like, wow, this is special, the impact that we have across the
26 globe.

1 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Right, and I've witnessed it
2 firsthand, right, as recently as last year in May, all the way through that year.

3 Veronica, from where you sit, you or Vic, either one, can you
4 give me some examples? Maybe give the crowd here of international work
5 that has had a direct benefit to what the NRC is doing domestically?

6 MS. RODRIGUEZ ALFONSO: So, I would say one of our
7 best examples -- and you heard it in the video -- it's our cooperation with the
8 U.S. and Canada, and how we start bringing a lot of value into our work in
9 terms of the licensing of the BWRX-300 application.

10 And it's one of those, when we work with various countries,
11 I like to group them in different buckets. When we cooperate with the U.S.
12 and Canada, that's what I called the mature regulatory bodies. It's where we
13 have a two-way road. The learn from us as much as we learn from them.

14 So, I know that there's a lot of staff members here that are
15 driving the bus behind and from the backseat, like the Donna Williams, the
16 Stephanie Devlins, and the value that they bring to that, and how are we going
17 to be making progress into our mission. It's amazing.

18 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yeah, I just returned from
19 Turkiye this past week. And one of the things that I heard -- and it's not the
20 only embassy who has told me this; I've heard it from Bulgaria and Armenia,
21 from Poland -- and that is just how professional the OIP is; how engaged you
22 are.

23 In fact, the Turkiye lady from the embassy said the NRC is
24 their favorite agency to work with in the federal government, because of your
25 professionalism, what you know, what you bring to the table, and how you're
26 willing to help.

1 So, is there anything else about some of those relationships
2 that -- I know what it means to me when I'm traveling, right? We meet with
3 the embassy early on to try to understand what is the message, right?

4 MS. RODRIGUEZ ALFONSO: Yeah.

5 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: And, you know, some of the
6 things that we've done to help people --

7 MS. RODRIGUEZ ALFONSO: Yes, so I would say that we
8 do a lot of very important work that has less direct impact on the NRC but also
9 has a very strong connection and helps advance U.S. foreign policy goals.

10 A good example of that is what we're doing in Europe with
11 Poland, where we are enabling the deployment of U.S. technologies overseas.
12 But at the same time, we're helping the United States make inroads against
13 Russia.

14 Similarly, in countries like Singapore and the Philippines, we
15 are helping combat influences from China.

16 Another region that is very interested in what we are doing
17 here at the NRC is South America. They are paying very close attention to
18 what we are doing under Part 57. Because, for the first time ever, they can
19 see that technology bringing benefits to their own countries. That technology
20 will allow them to provide reliable power to areas where they have very
21 challenging landscapes, like the Amazonian.

22 So, the NRC is not only bringing value with those
23 cooperations, but we also have a very strong connection/strategic impact on,
24 and benefits on, the geopolitical benefits of the U.S. Government.

25 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: For those of you who may not
26 know, when the Commissioners are traveling around -- and I'll use my

1 experience personally because I've lived it -- when we get out and meet with
2 some of these, we're meeting with presidents of countries, ministers of energy,
3 ministers of finance, ministers of the environment, leaders in parliament, and
4 we're finding out from the regulator what their issues are.

5 And one of the things that we learned -- we found this initially
6 in Romania -- was they weren't giving them all the money. So, we worked
7 with them to do things like that.

8 So, those discussions have impact and it carries forward.
9 And we now are plugged in with DOE and with the Department of Commerce
10 and trying to carry that to a whole-of-government approach.

11 Is there anything you want to share about some of those?

12 MS. RODRIGUEZ ALFONSO: I think that the work in OIP,
13 it's incredibly challenging because we need to build those relationships, and
14 building those relationships, that doesn't happen overnight. The desk officers
15 are the experts of the countries within their portfolio.

16 But in order for us to become experts, we need to monitor
17 the news, press releases. We talk to the Department of State and the
18 Department of Energy, the U.S. embassies who are eyes and ears on the
19 ground. We monitor what the staff is doing to get a better understanding of
20 the technical topics within that country. And we have periodic meetings with
21 our regulatory counterparts. And those interactions, those connections help
22 build trust and break cultural barriers. That doesn't happen overnight.

23 So, when they come to us and request assistance, they
24 know that the desk officers, OIP, and the staff, we are their best advocates
25 and we'll find solutions to collaborate and make sure that the NRC expertise
26 brings value to their countries.

1 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: And for one Commissioner
2 representing the rest, what you do to prep us before we go on our trips is
3 invaluable, and then, those interactions with the embassy before we go do our
4 job, so that we can report back, I think it's having a huge impact. And I thank
5 you. I'm a big fan of OIP.

6 And, Vic, I wish you the best as you try to build on the
7 legacy. Thank you.

8 MR. HALL: Thank you, Commissioner. I appreciate it.

9 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: All right, our time is up. That
10 went fast.

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. GLENN: Thank you. Thank you.

13 Outstanding job, to Commissioner Wright and his guests.

14 We're going to welcome Commissioner Crowell and his
15 guests to the stage. So, we're welcoming Commissioner Crowell along with
16 Stephanie Morrow and Molly Keefe-Forsyth.

17 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: So, good morning,
18 everyone.

19 I think this is on. Yes? We're content.

20 Thank you for attending and listening online. This is a new
21 format for the All Hands Meeting, and I'm delighted to share the stage this
22 morning with Stephanie Morrow and Molly Keefe to talk about two leaders in
23 our agency's Safety Culture Program. And I'm excited to talk about safety
24 culture today because it has an impact on all that we do, all that we're doing
25 at the NRC.

26 And as I was listening to the previous panel with

1 Commissioner Wright, I realized that it also has an impact in the international
2 realm as well. You know, other countries watch how the U.S. handles safety
3 culture, and we can benefit from learning best practices from how other civilian
4 nuclear countries handle the safety culture.

5 I'm particularly interested in talking to you both about safety
6 culture now, as we go through so much change at the organization. We are
7 doing a Herculean amount of work, that we need to make sure our safety
8 culture applies to and is not lost in the volume and breadth of what we're doing,
9 but also because the future of the NRC looks different than it has been in the
10 past with new ways of licensing nuclear technologies; new license applicants
11 that haven't necessarily been in the nuclear field before, and therefore, do not
12 necessarily have the appreciation historically for why safety culture is so
13 important.

14 Now, I know safety culture at the NRC has -- I don't say this
15 in a negative way -- a checkered past because we have struggled to find ways
16 to implement something that is not necessarily black and white in how it is
17 applied. And I know that is a challenge for a
18 science-and-engineering-focused safety agency, but it is also incredibly
19 important.

20 I see the Safety Culture Program, a strong safety culture
21 program, as the early warning signs if something starts to go awry. And we
22 can head that off before we have an incident similar to what we have had in
23 the past, that has had us have to stop and relook at our agency's safety
24 culture.

25 You know, I think we all know the history, and we may get
26 into it a little bit here, between TMI and Davis-Besse and things like that. I

1 think one thing folks don't always remember is Davis-Besse was, you know,
2 within months on the heels of 9/11. And so, it kind of got lost a little bit in the
3 public's perspective, but we made important reforms based on that
4 experience.

5 So, let's get into a few questions here, and I'll turn it over to
6 whomever wants to take the first one. But just help me, and help our
7 audience, including the public and stakeholders who are listening. Tell me
8 what safety culture is to you to give us a sense of how you think about it from
9 a programmatic perspective at the NRC.

10 DR. MORROW: Yeah, absolutely.

11 Thank you for having us, Commissioner. We're really
12 happy to be able to have this chat with you.

13 I think, at its core, the safety culture is about the values and
14 behaviors that demonstrate that safety is a priority. And that shows up in how
15 people communicate. It shows up in how people make decisions and
16 whether people speak up when they see something that just doesn't look right.

17 I think of it, really, it's the connective tissue that makes our
18 technical programs and our regulatory programs work the way they're
19 supposed to.

20 MS. KEEFE-FORSYTH: So, you mentioned Davis-Besse.
21 That was a really pivotal moment in the history of the Safety Culture Program
22 here at the agency. At the time, the reactor oversight process was fairly new.
23 We were just starting to roll it out.

24 And for those in the audience who don't know, Davis-Besse,
25 it's a plant in Ohio that had had some boric acid corrosion on its reactor vessel
26 head that was discovered during an outage and could have led to a pretty

1 significant event.

2 And the root-cause evaluation from that was that the
3 underlying issues were cultural in nature. Particularly, people were not
4 asking hard questions. Their corrective action program was focused on
5 symptoms rather than the root cause. And they weren't using operating
6 experience.

7 So, at that time, the Commission tasked the staff with
8 figuring out how to fit safety culture into this new reactor oversight process.
9 And that's how we got to where we are today.

10 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: So, Molly, if you could build
11 on that a little bit and tell us more about how that experience has been applied
12 to the current operating reactor fleet we have today, and any experience you
13 have or things you want to point to in terms of early signals of safety culture
14 strengths or weaknesses that help inform our actions?

15 MS. KEEFE-FORSYTH: Sure. So, we typically start to
16 see breakdowns in culture at utilities that are going through major transitions,
17 particularly restarts or refueling outages or big events. And that's really when
18 you start to perceive that people are feeling pressure to emphasize production
19 versus safety, right?

20 There are milestones that need to be met. There are
21 construction goals that need to be met. This plant needs to come online.
22 And they really start to feel fatigued and like they can't push back against their
23 management about certain decisions that are being made. So, that's when
24 you start to see that people are not raising safety concerns. They might feel
25 reluctant to raise safety concerns for a variety of reasons. Those are some
26 of the signs that we look for.

1 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: And in today's
2 environment, where we're making needed reforms in terms of improving our
3 efficiency, where we're being cognizant not to cut corners on safety in meeting
4 those new efficiency measures, you know, the safety culture is going to be as
5 big of an impact as anything else in ensuring that we're not cutting corners
6 and maintaining a safety focus.

7 Stephanie, maybe you can tell me a little bit more about, you
8 know, from a day-to-day perspective, what does working in safety culture look
9 like and how does it apply in your daily work, such that the public can
10 understand what our Safety Culture Program is?

11 DR. MORROW: Yeah. So, what's interesting about
12 safety culture is it's not like a single metric. There's not one thing that we look
13 at for determining what it looks like.

14 And it's more about looking at multiple lines of evidence to
15 see patterns and see trends. And in the reactor oversight process, for
16 example, the way we're looking at that in our oversight of operating reactors
17 is primarily, first, through our cross-cutting areas -- human performance,
18 problem identification and resolution, and safety-conscious work environment.

19 We also see patterns and trends through our allegation
20 program. And when we're talking about formal safety culture assessments,
21 that can consist of surveys, interviews, focus groups. And we're really
22 looking at: where are there themes, and where can we draw evidence-based
23 conclusions about a site's culture and how their decisions, how their
24 communication demonstrates the priority that they're placing on safety?

25 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: So, you know, for the NRC
26 to have a strong external safety culture oversight program, we also have to

1 practice what we preach and have a strong internal safety culture that will
2 translate and materialize into giving constructive, continuous-learning
3 feedback to our staff, our licensees, and stakeholders.

4 But particularly, as the Chairman mentioned earlier, we're
5 going to be hiring lots of staff going forward to handle this workload. We have
6 got to make sure those new staff, especially if they are earlier in their career,
7 fully understand and embrace the safety culture mindset, as they also
8 embrace the efficiency and enabling mindset that we are adopting here.

9 How do we practice what we preach internally?

10 MS. KEEFE-FORSYTH: So, yeah, that's a great question.
11 So, our role, obviously, is very different, right? We're not in a control room.
12 We're not manipulating equipment at a plant.

13 What we are doing is influencing policy, developing
14 inspection programs and inspection procedures that our inspectors use when
15 they're out there in the field.

16 And so, our job is about making decisions. We are also not
17 immune to cultural pressures. As you said, you know, we're in a period of a
18 lot of transition right now as well. And I think the important thing is building
19 trust and making sure that people feel like they can raise concerns; that they
20 can have differing professional opinions; that it's okay to not always agree,
21 and that they can be heard.

22 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: It reminds me somewhat of
23 an experience in my freshman year of college, when a friend of mine across
24 the way in the dorms who was an engineer, but he wanted to take philosophy
25 courses. And he took some philosophy courses, and he was so frustrated
26 that there wasn't just one right answer that came out of it.

1 (Laughter.)

2 And there's a little bit of safety culture there, but we all have
3 an intuitive sense of when we are practicing good safety culture, and we need
4 to maintain that.

5 Yes, it's a softer science in practice, but I encourage you,
6 it's important because up at the Commission level that is a softer science as
7 well from all the things that we have to consider.

8 So, thank you for all that you do. Thank you for inviting me
9 to speak to your staff recently, which inspired this conversation. And please
10 keep up the good work. Thank you.

11 DR. MORROW: Thank you.

12 MS. KEEFE-FORSYTH: Thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 MS. GLENN: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for that
15 talk from Commissioner Crowell and his guests Stephanie and Molly.

16 We are now welcoming Commissioner Marzano to the
17 stage, along with his guest Nik Floyd.

18 COMMISSIONER MARZANO: Good morning, everyone.
19 I appreciate the opportunity to have a little discussion with Nik Floyd.

20 So, this session I've titled, "Enabling in Practice," and I think
21 I want to get into a little bit more detail about that in a second.

22 But before we do, Nik, coming from Region I, an inspector,
23 tell us a little bit about your journey at the NRC; how you ended up where you
24 are today sitting right across from myself.

25 MR. FLOYD: Sure. Thank you for having me for this. It's
26 a great opportunity and, yeah, I'm happy to provide my inspector perspective.

1 So, I am a Senior Reactor Inspector out of our Region I
2 office, located in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. I joined the NRC about 16
3 years ago through the Nuclear Safety Professional Development Program,
4 and that was on a track to become a Resident Inspector. Now, I didn't stay
5 on that track, but I did do several acting positions as a resident at various
6 nuclear power plants. I also served as a Senior Resident Inspector at Indian
7 Point during their last year of operation. Did a rotation here in Headquarters
8 doing security.

9 So, I tried to dabble in as much as I could, but, ultimately,
10 about eight years ago, I ended up as a Senior Reactor Inspector in the
11 Engineering Branch I'm in today, leading various team inspections; diving into
12 issues such as in-service inspection, design team inspections.

13 And then, some of the major projects I've been involved
14 with, one of the early-on projects was the alkali-silica reaction issue at
15 Seabrook. I started that in 2013. And then, more recently, I'm
16 not -- unofficial title -- Regional Project Manager of the Crane, though the lead
17 inspector, helping to do the coordination and the oversight of inspections for
18 restart at the power plant.

19 COMMISSIONER MARZANO: Well, that's excellent.

20 And, you know, for those of you looking for professional
21 development opportunities at the NRC, just look at Nik's path here and see all
22 the things that you can involved with.

23 So, I want to dive into this topic. And, you know, within the
24 first couple of weeks of me joining the Commission, I had the opportunity to
25 vote on our new mission statement. And I thank my colleagues
26 Commissioner Wright and Commissioner Crowell for their work together to

1 collaborate to get us to what we are now displaying as our mission.

2 You know, we'll get into a little bit of this in a second here,
3 but I had a little hand in helping getting the ADVANCE Act passed, and the
4 mission statement was a big part of that.

5 But from that perspective, I think one of the things for me
6 was, well, how do we show people what this actually means? I think the most
7 important thing about implementing and striving to meet this mission is, what
8 does that mean day to day for someone? How are they day after day meeting
9 the mission and the intent of what Congress and the Administration kind of
10 had for this new mission statement?

11 So, tell us, what was your reaction when this mission
12 statement rolled out?

13 MR. FLOYD: Well, I mean, really, my first reaction was:
14 that's a mouthful.

15 (Laughter.)

16 Like that's a really long mission statement. I don't know
17 how I'm going to remember this.

18 (Laughter.)

19 My second reaction was, you know, never ever have I seen
20 the words "enable" and "efficiency" or "efficient" be used in the same sentence
21 with "nuclear safety."

22 I mean, my initial training always drove me: follow the
23 process. Follow the procedure. And follow that issue through completion.
24 Right?

25 And in doing so, you know, we do this consistently with
26 those procedures, but it's not always efficient because it's not a

1 one-size-fits-all process. Right? So, it doesn't take into consideration
2 sometimes the risk-significant issues. And as inspectors, we can kind of get
3 caught up in those things, trying to drive it to closure. Right? I think, as an
4 inspector, we're all guilty of that.

5 And so, one of the things I had to do with the new mission
6 statement, I had to take a step back. It's like I don't know if those words really
7 mean what I think they mean.

8 And what I came to the conclusion was, really, our core
9 focus on safety didn't change. The mission statement might have been
10 updated to reflect some of the new direction of the agency, but what we do as
11 inspectors and oversight has not changed at all. I mean, we're still doing
12 risk-informed inspections, performing space inspections. Those processes
13 that we started before the mission statement still continue today. So, yeah.

14 COMMISSIONER MARZANO: Okay. Well, that is very
15 interesting. I think, you know, from my perspective -- maybe I can share a
16 little bit about what we were doing in Congress before in developing this
17 mission statement language.

18 And I think you actually raised a very, very interesting point,
19 and one that we had discussed at the time. It's that, you know, if you look at
20 the text of the bill and what we did, there was no altering of the NRC's statutory
21 responsibilities under the Atomic Energy Act.

22 So, I think that there was this question that was going on.
23 You know, nuclear is a very bipartisan issue -- it continues to be -- on the Hill.
24 And the ADVANCE Act was this really crucial piece of legislation that
25 everybody had an interest in getting forward. But even within that, there is
26 still deliberations of policy and how to get there.

1 So, one of the things that we had to try and work on with that
2 to get everybody onboard was understanding that this, you know, some of it
3 was, is this a messaging exercise? What do these words actually mean when
4 it comes down to it?

5 And then, there was this bigger philosophical debate on
6 some of what you're talking about. It is: what is the NRC's role within this
7 entire ecosystem?

8 And I think one of the things that I keep coming back to and
9 a point. And I will do it again, and a little bit of a history lesson here. It's
10 going back to the congressional declaration of policy in the Atomic Energy Act.

11 And what it says is that:

12 "Atomic energy is capable of application for peaceful as well
13 as military purposes. It is therefore declared to be the policy of the United
14 States that--

15 "the development, use, and control of atomic energy shall
16 be directed so as to make the maximum contribution to the general welfare,
17 subject at all times to the paramount objective of making the maximum
18 contribution to the common defense and security; and

19 "the development, use, and control of atomic energy shall
20 be directed so as to promote world peace, improve the general welfare,
21 increase the standard of living, and strengthen free competition in private
22 enterprise."

23 So, if you are actually competing for a word count in a
24 mission, that one actually probably, I think, takes the cake.

25 But the reason why I'm reading this off right now is because
26 this was the atomic energy and this was in 1954. In 1975, when Congress

1 split the Atomic Energy Commission into the NRC and what now is DOE, you
2 know, there's some legislative history that you can trace through.

3 And the framers at that time looked at this congressional
4 declaration of policy and said the NRC is actually responsible for the control
5 piece of that. But it's not that we're controlling atomic energy such that there
6 is no risk at all.

7 What it is, it is the control directed to make the maximum
8 contribution to general welfare, to the common defense; promote world peace;
9 improve the general welfare, the standard of living; strengthen free enterprise.

10 And so, really, what the mission statement did is effectuate
11 and put an emphasis on those words and that original intent. And so, today,
12 we're at this place where we have now started taking drastic action to really
13 kind of live up to this original intent, I think.

14 And so, what I would like to use the rest of the time now, it
15 is that, you know, we have had these huge changes, especially in the
16 inspections space; how we're executing the oversight mission without
17 compromising our core responsibilities. How do we disposition issues now
18 that, you know, we've changed the threshold for reporting on some of these
19 things. So, how do we disposition those that would have met that threshold
20 in the past, but now don't? And how are we ensuring that these
21 low-safety-significant issues don't become bigger problems over time? And
22 how can we spot declines in plant performance? A really easy thing.

23 (Laughter.)

24 But that's why you're here. So, I would like to maybe, you
25 know, building on your career, your history, maybe walk through a couple of
26 examples of how you have seen this concept --

1 (Interruption by microphone malfunction.)

2 That was not part of the show.

3 (Laughter.)

4 So, we'll go back to it. Two examples of how you see
5 putting this new mission statement into practice, especially this "enabling"
6 piece of it, in the day-to-day work in inspection and oversight?

7 MR. FLOYD: Yeah, thank you for that.

8 You know, "enabling" and "inspection," again, initially, I
9 never thought how you combine the two, but when you look at it, it's really the
10 facilitation through our current inspection program. Right?

11 And so, thinking about that, I want to cover one of the
12 projects I was involved in historically. So, I want to go back to this alkali-silica
13 reaction issue, because it's still ongoing. Right? I started that in 2013 and I
14 still have that. I have yet to turn it over. We'll get there.

15 But I think that's an important project because at the time
16 the NRC really had to understand the safety issue at the plant -- right? -- as it
17 presented itself at the plant. And it's an aging mechanism.

18 And so, we really worked with that licensee early on to
19 understand the safety impact, and then, we engaged with them through dialog,
20 even through their large-scale test program that they conducted down in
21 Texas, every step of the way, and including even our Resident and Senior
22 Resident Inspector at the site, when they observed that the buildings had
23 some deformation, they got involved in the process. And we didn't take a
24 step back, no. We stayed engaged with the licensee to really inform their test
25 program and their aging management programs.

26 I mean, I just bring that full circle just because that's a prime

1 example where the NRC, through dialog, engagement, the conversation with
2 that utility, it really helped the NRC provide and, you know, using the words of
3 the mission statement, "enable" us to approve their renewed operating
4 license. I think without that engagement -- that back-and-forth helped
5 tremendously.

6 So, that's one example. And that's kind of before the new
7 mission statement. So, let's go into current time.

8 So, I said this before. Our core focus on safety has not
9 changed. I mean, in my mind as an inspector, yes, it's evolved over time, but
10 something that I like to tell new inspectors through my mentoring, through my
11 training, is, you know, stay focused on safety. Do not waste your time on
12 low-level safety issues. Right? If you can easily screen a low-compliance
13 issue, you need to move on.

14 And to take the step back to understand what that means is,
15 if you find something through walking through the plant, through reviewing a
16 document, I mean, really, the first question that inspector needs to ask
17 themselves is: what is the safety issue? If there is no safety issue, and that
18 licensee puts it into their corrective action program, then we need to just move
19 on.

20 And that's important because we always had this phrase,
21 right? "Trust but verify." Right? We trust and have confidence in that
22 corrective action program. And so, we shouldn't continue to spin our wheels
23 and resources on that. We should be able to move on and not hold up an
24 inspection because we want to keep on this. We need to be able to move
25 forward.

26 And that's the first thing. Like, for example, right -- I always

1 like to provide examples -- so, for example, let's say an inspector is walking
2 through the plant and they come across a pump or pipe support, and they see
3 some differences with the bolt size. The licensee says, okay, that's not
4 complying. Let's go back and look at it. And like, yup, that's the wrong size.
5 And aha, a safety issue, right?

6 Well, no. They go; they analyze it. They determine, no, it
7 can still perform its safety function. It's put in the CAP. Now, we can move
8 on. We don't need to stay there, keep spinning the wheels. "Well, what
9 about everything else?" No, we can go beyond that, right?

10 And so, that's like the first big thing that I wanted to put out
11 there. The second thing, I mean, beyond just core focus on safety, a lot of
12 the things that I come back to is, what does the term "value-added" mean for
13 me? And "value-added" does not necessarily equate to number of inspection
14 findings. I mean, "value-added" are those observations that we provide while
15 in the plant. It can also be a whole other suite of items, but it's not necessarily
16 the findings that we present.

17 I mean, realistically, from my time as an in-service inspector,
18 I will give another example. Right? And so, let's say I'm out in the plant and
19 I'm observing an exam. This is a non-destructive examination on a pipe weld.
20 Well, let's say that examiner, that technician, is on the wrong pipe weld.
21 Okay, that's an issue.

22 I'm not going to wait for him to complete his exam and miss
23 another weld exam, and then, say, "Aha, I got you. Violation." No, I'm going
24 to point it out real-time. I don't get credit for a violation; that's fine, but it's still
25 value-added, right? And then, we walk through why this happened and you
26 go through the process.

1 So, you don't have to have all those things. So again, if I
2 could refocus everything, the core focus is on safety. And I don't think
3 anything has changed to date. I think we still have the same processes in
4 play.

5 The big focus now -- and I'll end on this, right, because I
6 ramble on. I'll end on this. For me, I view the RV changes, the changes to
7 our inspection guidance, I view them as a positive. Right? And I view them
8 as a positive because of what I just said. It helps keep the inspector's focus
9 on those safety-significant items that matter. Right? We don't have to get
10 caught up on low-safety items. We can just focus on more important things.

11 And at the end of the day, if we do come across something
12 that has high safety-significance that we need to follow up on, as an agency,
13 we will put those resources to the test. We will follow that to closure. But
14 we should be able to scale our process, as we have before and as we will
15 continue to do so, to do that.

16 So, that's what I will end on.

17 COMMISSIONER MARZANO: Well, I appreciate that, Nik,
18 and it is okay that you took your time to say this, because I think people need
19 to know about how the NRC is approaching our oversight and inspection in
20 this new paradigm, and it is not a change in our standards and standards for
21 safety or our requirements. It is about communication. It is about building
22 trust, and it's about acting on safety-significant issues appropriately.

23 So, I'm glad that you had many illustrious examples for us
24 because I want people to be listening and hearing how the NRC is
25 approaching this in the future. So, thank you, Nik. I appreciate it.

26 And on to the show.

1 (Applause.)

2 MS. GLENN: Thank you to Commissioner Marzano and to
3 Nik.

4 (Applause.)

5 MS. GLENN: All right, so let's give another round of
6 applause for the fireside chats. Hopefully everyone enjoyed that new format
7 today.

8 (Applause.)

9 MS. GLENN: If we could, we'll have the full commission to
10 join us on stage. Let's give them a hand as they come.

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. GLENN: All right. So, I hope everyone is excited.
13 We've had an amazing morning so far from our welcome video to also the
14 fireside chat, and now we're transitioning over to question and answers.

15 So, now it's time for us to go ahead and hear from the full
16 compliment of the staff. And the that we're going to start this morning is we're
17 going to have -- we have our Toastmasters guest that's here with us, Nicole
18 Medina, and Nicole is going to assist us by reading one of the pre-submitted
19 questions that came in. I'm going to turn the floor over to Nicole.

20 MS. MEDINA: Thank you, Patricia. So our first question
21 is, what is the Commission doing to prevent burnout and help with retention?

22 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Thank you for the -- is this on? Okay.
23 Hey, I do have to note that it sounded like, you know, several of my colleagues
24 on the commission agreed to use up the time from Commissioner Weaver.
25 So, I appreciate you guys doing that.

26 (Laughter.)

1 CHAIRMAN NIEH: But that was not the agree-upon
2 program here. So, duly noted.

3 Okay. So, what the Commission is going to do to help with
4 burnout. One, we have to acknowledge that it's happening. And as I
5 mentioned in my remarks, the Commission knows it's happening. We have
6 a push to make to finalize these rules. You've heard it in the video earlier
7 today, America needs what we're doing. Nothing worth doing is ever easy
8 and we recognize that.

9 The things that the Commission will do is thoughtful
10 decisions in our budget reviews, to make sure that the staff do have the
11 requisite resources to get the work done. We want to support the work that
12 you're currently doing by ensuring that you get very clear direction from the
13 Commission that's meaningful and additive to the work that we're trying to
14 accomplish here, to enable the safe and secure use of nuclear technologies.

15 And the other thing is we, the Commission, and at least I
16 feel, we want to support the lead framework. Right? That is how we are
17 going to work smarter, not harder. We can't keep doing the same things
18 we've always done and expect more efficient results. We have to
19 fundamentally look at how we're doing our work.

20 And that is what we are accomplishing with all these rules
21 that we've developed. That you have developed. You all have developed
22 these licensing frameworks, the efficiencies in the oversight program. Nik, I
23 love what you said. Right? These are the things that the Commission is
24 going to support. We know it's hard right now, but I am confident it will get
25 better.

26 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: I don't really have anything to

1 add. You said it well.

2 COMMISSIONER MARZANO: I think, you know, we are at
3 this moment in time, this effort to get 14300 done as, you know, what I imagine
4 to be a one-time thing in this big push that this administration is trying to get
5 us, you know, to look at our regulations, and update them and modernize them
6 for the technology and all of that. And so, you know, there is still some work
7 to do, both on behalf of staff and the Commission. But we'll be doing it
8 together. One of the things that we can be doing is timely action on the
9 policies that you guys are proposing to us.

10 And then looking to the future. You know, I think there are
11 going to be a number of opportunities for professional development. I think
12 ensuring that we have strong professional development programs and
13 presenting those opportunities, especially through the TTC and using that as
14 kind of a pivot point for that, is going to be really important for that long-term
15 kind of career goals and sustainability here at the organization.

16 And then, you know, I think the jury's still out on how these
17 efficiencies that we are pursuing will actually show up day-to-day. And I think
18 that jobs will get better if we, you know, we have tools, including some of our
19 artificial intelligence, how we're using that to help us day-to-day. But we have
20 more work to do.

21 And I think, you know, if the question ends up getting asked,
22 maybe we'll talk a little bit about workplace flexibility.

23 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: And if I may add -- and
24 we're going to do our best not to have all of us needlessly answer every
25 question, so we can get to as many questions as possible. But I just wanted
26 to make that whatever we do to address the burnout issue, that also has a

1 material impact on our hiring and recruitment efforts.

2 You know, new employees aren't going to want to come to
3 an agency that's losing employees because of burnout. So, that's an
4 important thing to remember. And I hope that as the Commission, we're able
5 to listen to the staff and incorporate ideas for addressing burnout that will make
6 the most sense, and that it's an integrated effort to figure out how to address
7 those issues. Thanks.

8 MS. GLENN: Thank you. Nicole, if you would read an
9 additional question for us, please.

10 MS. MEDINA: For about two years now, the Agency has
11 apparently been losing staff, especially at experienced senior levels, at a rate
12 well in excess of replacement. Yet the workload continues to increase and
13 many additional significant licensing actions and regulatory reviews are now
14 in the works that will presumably be enabled by numerous rulemakings.
15 Does the Agency have the personnel necessary to succeed on these reviews,
16 and if so, what is the basis for such an expectation?

17 CHAIRMAN NIEH: I'll give some initial thoughts on that.
18 Yes, I believe we have the skill sets we need. Do we need to strengthen the
19 skill sets we have? Do we need to fill vacancies? Absolutely. But look at
20 our results that we're producing. I am so proud of the safety decisions that
21 we have been able to deliver under this extraordinary workload. Right?

22 There is no denying at all that we are working in the most
23 extraordinary period in our agency's history with these massive reforms that
24 we're making with our rules. And at the same time, we're delivering licensing
25 decisions that are enabling the growth of nuclear energy in this country.

26 License renewals. A year ago, they were taking over 18

1 months to complete. Now the last few that we've done, we've done them in
2 under 12 months. We are creating a new pattern of behavior for how we do
3 our work.

4 The BWRX-300 construction permit that I mentioned earlier
5 today, four months ahead of schedule. We're doing that because we're
6 working smarter, we're focusing on what matters most for safety, and we have
7 leaders that are aligned, that are looking for the ways to support the staff the
8 best they can and holding the whole team accountable for the results we're
9 doing.

10 Other things that we're doing to help, though -- and I know
11 this, I know my commissioners go out and travel a lot. And I've heard them
12 in our bilateral discussions here, that we are encouraging people to apply for
13 jobs at the NRC. This is a great place to work. We have to continue to
14 encourage people at all levels throughout their careers, entry level, mid level,
15 and senior level people to want to come here and work and be part of this
16 incredible work that's happening at the Agency.

17 So, I believe we have the staff now. I know we need to
18 strengthen it through training, hiring, recruitment, and development. And
19 then using the lead the framework to make sure that we work efficiently and
20 be risk-informed in how we do our business.

21 COMMISSIONER MARZANO: Yeah. I'll echo. You
22 know, looking at the lead framework, I think there's a lot of tools in this
23 framework that can answer and address this question. You know, knowledge
24 management, knowledge retention, and continuous improvement are all
25 linked together. And I think, you know, on an individual basis kind of
26 internalizing these concepts that everybody's responsible for that, for

1 knowledge management and our ability to train and develop the next
2 generation that's coming on.

3 I think it's also really important, you know, we're undergoing
4 this strategic workforce planning process that, you know, we're trying to use
5 new tools to really drive at where is the true need in the Agency. And so, you
6 know, through the Nexus tool and as these things start to roll out, I think -- I
7 encourage folks to really take this effort seriously, because that's going to be
8 the data and the justification that we're going to need when we go to our
9 appropriators and ask for the resources that we're going to need to fill that.
10 Because it's supported by the actual, you know, day-to-day needs of the
11 Agency.

12 So, I think that those are another couple things. But looking
13 to that lead framework, there's a lot in that where you can derive a lot of how
14 to kind of guide and navigate through these really difficult and challenging
15 workloads.

16 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: David, did you want to add
17 anything? I was going to add a quick thought.

18 (No audible response.)

19 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: Okay. So, you know,
20 when I'm engaging external audiences I often get asked the question of what
21 keeps me up at night, or I offer what keeps me up at night, and it's workforce.
22 Both externally for enabling, you know, this nuclear renaissance that has
23 gained moment, but also internally so we can keep up without undermining
24 our safety mission and, you know, and maintaining that safety threshold as we
25 enable it and become more efficient.

26 I don't -- you know, there's a little bit of art, not science to

1 this. I don't think we're at the tipping point yet where our workload has so
2 outpaced our staff resources, but we could easily get there very quickly. And
3 if we're not prepared in advance to transition very quickly or not as successful
4 in our recruiting efforts, we're going to find ourselves in a tough spot.

5 And, you know, there's an awkwardness here about how,
6 you know, budgeting works in the federal environment, and fee-funded and all
7 this stuff, but it's important to me that we don't find ourselves behind the
8 eight-ball and it's too late to get staffed up for what we need when the amount
9 of work reaches that tipping point. So, I think we're all mindful of that and
10 keeping an eye on it, but we need to hear from all the leadership and staff to
11 make sure we're not missing anything.

12 MR. KING: Yeah, if I could just add one thing. For the first
13 time in several months, we've had some recent indications of things are kind
14 of turning a little bit in the positive direction. You know, we recently went
15 through the reorganization. I think that provided some stability in the
16 organization. People know who their leaders are in the organization.

17 But we've recently had -- a number of former staff who left
18 during the past two years have come back, and executives. So for the first
19 time in a couple years, we're really starting to see folks that recently left decide
20 to come back to the Agency. I think that's a positive early sign.

21 MS. GLENN: Thank you. Oh, go ahead.

22 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: I just want to add. I want to
23 remind you, the years before the ADVANCE Act and before the executive
24 orders, you were already planning. You had already started doing strategic
25 workforce planning. You'd already started knowledge management. You'd
26 already started a lot of these things. And when the storm clouds hit, which

1 they did, because one thing constant in this world is change, you were ready
2 for that. Right? You were ready for that.

3 And yes, we lost people. We lost some good people. But
4 we didn't lose our way. And a lot of you stepped up. And I'm, you know,
5 we're very proud as a commission up here to see what you did to take those
6 leadership roles. And everything else has piggybacked on top of that. And
7 I -- you're meeting the moment, you know, you've got this, and you're showing
8 it every day. So, thank you.

9 (Applause.)

10 MS. GLENN: Thank you. I think that does deserve a
11 round of applause. Let's also give Nicole a hand. Thank you to
12 Toastmasters for volunteering today to help us read some of the pre-submitted
13 questions.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. GLENN: And with that, I'm going to go ahead and
16 open the floor up to those who are in the auditorium, also to those that are in
17 the regional offices, and to those that are joining us on Teams online, to go
18 ahead and get in the queue. You can come to the microphones here. In the
19 regions, you can go over to the microphones in your regions. And then on
20 Teams online, please do raise your hand.

21 One quick reminder for everybody that is on Teams.
22 Remember, if you have a question, you need to go to the green link and that's
23 where you will go into the breakout room for questions and answers. If you
24 need a reminder of where that is, check your calendar scheduler, to go over
25 there.

26 And with that, I'm looking for folks in the room. Please don't

1 be shy. Come on up to the microphones if you have anything. I'm scanning
2 for folks that are at the regions as well. And in the interim, we will go ahead
3 and read an additional pre-submitted question.

4 If the NRC is unable to recover 90 percent of its budget due
5 to fixed-fee caps in FY2027 as a result of EO14300, what impact does that
6 have on FTE and funding in the future?

7 CHAIRMAN NIEH: I think they're glad to have me take that
8 one. We are not anticipating hitting these fee caps. Look at the
9 performance we're having right now. We've implemented the fee cap as a
10 result of the executive order, and the way we're going to implement that is to
11 use our flexibilities with what we draw off of basically net BA here. So, we
12 have some flexibilities in how we do that. We don't anticipate any major
13 impacts to FTE or our budget with these fee caps in place.

14 COMMISSIONER MARZANO: I'll also say, you know, in
15 executing this policy, you know, it's really important to understand and define
16 what would constitute an applicant failure or an NRC failure. And I think I
17 know our staff right now are hard at work at ensuring that these lines are clear.
18 And that's going to also be incumbent upon us as -- in engaging with
19 applicants and licensees to be very, very upfront about those definitions as
20 well.

21 So again, I definitely share the Chairman's perspective that
22 we shouldn't expect that we're going to reach a fee cap at any point in time.
23 But it takes a lot of back and forth, communication, engagement, and sound
24 policy from our folks at the CFO office to make us successful there.

25 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: And I'm not going to
26 answer the question, but I am going to remind folks of something the EDO told

1 me earlier, is that he would buy lunch for the first person who asked a question
2 in the audience or on Teams.

3 (Laughter.)

4 CHAIRMAN NIEH: I forgot my lunch today, so I'm going to
5 ask a question.

6 (Laughter.)

7 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: Go somewhere expensive.

8 MS. GLENN: All right. We'll see if there are any takers.
9 We do have some questions in the region, though. So, we're going to go
10 ahead, and please do someone come. We're here for you today. We want
11 to hear as many voices as possible. But let's go over to Region 2. We are
12 ready for the question that you have.

13 MR. MCKOWN: Good morning. Thanks for meeting with
14 us today. This is Lou McKown out in Region 2. As you've met with these
15 external stakeholders and with industry, are there any tools, skill sets, tips,
16 tricks that you've observed that have yet to be implemented here to help
17 address work throughput or burnout?

18 I'm thinking of things like streamlined workflow tools, data
19 steward AI agents that help us find answers faster, leading indicators that
20 would inform supervisors or managers that portions of an organization are
21 more stressed than they may appear. Anything like that?

22 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Yeah. Thanks, Lou, for the question.
23 One thing came to my mind. I was thinking about my experience working in
24 the industry and what we're doing here in implementing a discipline
25 management model with the roll out of a lead framework. One thing that I
26 saw a lot of high-performing organizations do is, they take a deliberate effort

1 to streamline, simplify and eliminate work that is not contributing to their
2 business outcomes. And in our case, our mission outcomes.

3 So, as I see it, and I certainly feel that our EDO, Mike King,
4 is 100 percent empowered to have the entire agency work with that mindset.
5 What are we doing that is not adding value to mission outcomes that we want
6 to achieve with safety and enabling? And the whole culture that we want to
7 get to is that we find those things and we don't do them anymore.

8 I remember sitting in this room, I don't know how many years
9 ago, but it was when I was the head of NRR. We had the entire leadership
10 team of the Agency, and the table I was at, we walked away and we agreed
11 to go back to our offices and find one thing that we're doing, one dumb thing
12 that we're doing that's not helping us achieve our work and we're going to stop
13 doing that.

14 My suggestion and advice to you all is do that. Raise these
15 issues with your staff. Find the things that are eating your lunch and eliminate
16 them from our work.

17 MS. GLENN: All right. Thank you. I want to go ahead
18 and invite our Teams folks. Please, reminder, once you're in the breakout
19 room, to raise your hand, raise your virtual hand so that we know you have a
20 question. I see there are more folks that are in there now.

21 All right. So, we will go ahead and we will go back to
22 Region 2. Region 2 has another question. So, Region 2, we're ready for
23 you.

24 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Wait, only one of you get
25 lunch.

26 (Laughter.)

1 MS. GLENN: All right. Maybe they --

2 (Simultaneous speaking.)

3 PARTICIPANT: -- back from the previous question.

4 MS. GLENN: All right. So, we're opened up for questions.

5 We're looking at that. I'm going to challenge you all. We're here until noon.

6 (Laughter.)

7 MS. GLENN: So, if you have questions, come to the
8 microphone. I'm going to go ahead -- we're going to go to another
9 pre-submitted question in the interim. The question is --

10 PARTICIPANT: Have one.

11 MS. GLENN: Oh, awesome. Come on up.

12 PARTICIPANT: I just forgot my lunch today, so --

13 (Laughter.)

14 MS. GLENN: We have a winner.

15 PARTICIPANT: Thanks in advance.

16 (Laughter.)

17 PARTICIPANT: So before one of the pre-submitted
18 questions was about recruitment, retention, making sure we have what we
19 need. One of the things I didn't hear in some of the answers was really about
20 retention. Because, I think recruitment's great. We have so many new
21 people. I loved hearing Justin up there today talk about the NRAN program.
22 He's particularly great because he was also a human factors person, so.

23 But I think we need to, you know, also recognize that there's
24 irreplaceable knowledge that we have to try and keep in-house. Because we
25 can bring those people up to speed, but we need people to mentor them. So,
26 if you could say a little bit more about retention and your approach to that, I'd

1 appreciate it. And thanks for lunch. I appreciate that, too.

2 (Laughter.)

3 COMMISSIONER MARZANO: Yeah, sure. I think it's
4 front of mind. And really when we were working on the ADVANCE Act and
5 thinking about the workforce authorities that were put in there, you know,
6 there's a couple of components to that. It's bringing in the new folks, but
7 the -- but Congress is deeply aware of the need to retain that knowledge that
8 you're talking about. And so, that's why that was also a huge component of
9 that.

10 Now, even from when we passed the ADVANCE Act,
11 developed that policy to today, the industry has shifted monumentally and the
12 opportunities that are out there. And so, I think it's incumbent on us to
13 continue to look at, you know, making the NRC, and working here, and
14 contributing to what you're putting together for the future of nuclear energy in
15 the country is competitive with that.

16 So, we have some work to do. You know, the Commission
17 came together and we were able to develop the ten percent pay bonus over
18 the last couple of years. Now what we need to start doing is having
19 conversations about what does that look like kind of carrying on in the future.

20 And we're still working on these policies. But I think you
21 can look out across the federal government, there are examples of different
22 agencies where have been in similar competition for highly compensated
23 individuals and in need of, you know, very deep expertise if you look at things
24 like the SEC.

25 And so, you know, is there more that we can do under our
26 own authorities or do we need new authorities from -- in terms of

1 compensation? You know, I think that those are all things that we want to
2 keep open as possibilities and options and keep working with our partners in
3 Congress and the administration to try and achieve.

4 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Yeah. I want to add one thing. I think
5 Commissioner Marzano's spot on with the compensation. You all are worth
6 more than what you have been currently paid for, and that's reflected in the
7 actions we took this year. We're going to do the same thing next year, FY28.
8 There's things we have to pursue within the federal government to have a
9 more permanent path forward, but I assure you that is something that we want
10 to treat with a priority. Just it's pre-decisional at this point in whether we can
11 sustain that.

12 But one thing that I think is important to really know is that,
13 look, we're not here for the money, right? We're here because we are doing
14 something that is great for our country, right? And I'm so proud of you for
15 sticking it through with this agency. With all the challenge and turmoil we
16 went through last year, you all are still here and you're killing it. Right? The
17 results we are delivering are really incredible. I'm so proud of what you're
18 doing.

19 I think one thing that we could really do to help with retention
20 is what we're going to do with succession planning. Do we make it clear to
21 all of you what your career paths are? What skills, what training, what
22 opportunities, what experiences you need to have a meaningful career in this
23 agency. Right? And that's one thing I think that's a big part of the lead
24 framework. I know that under the Caroline in the OCHCO area, you guys are
25 getting best practices from the industry on how succession planning is done
26 to give that career clarity.

1 Look, we're here because we love what we do. Right?
2 We want to pay you more. Absolutely. And we want to give you a
3 meaningful career so that you can continue to grow and do great things in all
4 different areas. Just like what we're doing with the NRAN folks, right?
5 They're getting -- it's a whole, you know, I don't know what you call it, a variety
6 pack of NRC experiences as they're going through the program, right? We
7 want to make these options available for you. And part of how we're going to
8 do that is have a better way to do succession planning for our leaders in the
9 Agency.

10 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: I'm going to add, because
11 this is an important topic here. You know, pay is one helpful element of
12 retention, but it's not the only one. And the Chairman alluded to this. It's
13 also, you know, the opportunity to do something special at a unique time.

14 So, our cultural growth here at the Agency and regaining our
15 footing as one of the best agencies in the government to work for and at, we
16 have to strive for. You know, no amount of pay will make someone want to
17 come to a dysfunctional agency. So, we have to be to keep that in mind.

18 You know, I hope we can be as creative as possible within
19 the bounds of what we're able to do these days for retention. And one area I
20 think we could, you know, maybe help ourselves is by, you know, looking and
21 benchmarking against a wider variety of federal agencies, to be as creative as
22 possible about what is doable and available for retention options and institute
23 ones that make sense for the NRC.

24 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: You know, I come from a
25 retail background. Many years ago in another life, had retail franchises.
26 And the one thing that made my business successful and allowed me to hire

1 more people was having more business. Right? So, one of the things that
2 we have and to -- with safety, Justin, as our north star, the mission statement
3 where we say, enable the safe use and deployment of these nuclear
4 technologies. That's the critical path right there.

5 You know, as the industry decides to, if they're going to
6 grow, we're critical to that. And if we want to grow as an agency, the work
7 that comes in here that we have to do and we need to do, that's what's going
8 to build that path to retention. Because if this is a busy place and a place that
9 people -- you can't get where you want to go unless you come through the
10 NRC, that's where you want to be. And you are front and center right now.
11 You're first at the plate.

12 COMMISSIONER MARZANO: Somebody should please
13 ask David Wright what he was selling in retail.

14 (Laughter.)

15 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: I had three franchise Hickory
16 Farms stores and 13 satellites. So, I'm -- yeah.

17 MS. GLENN: Nice. All right, so we do see that there is a
18 question on Teams and we do have someone coming to the auditorium
19 microphone. So, great job, everyone. Let's keep the questions coming.

20 So David, we see you. We're elevating you. Please feel
21 free to go ahead and share your camera if you can, and we're ready for you
22 in the auditorium.

23 PARTICIPANT: Yes, thank you, everybody, good morning.

24 I guess my question is in respect to how do we, in this
25 ambitious environment that we're in right now, how do we prevent gold fever?

26 I mean, our history is loaded with disasters such as the

1 Challenger, Fukushima, RBMK, they knew about that problem in Chernobyl,
2 Apollo 1, they knew the problem existed.

3 These issues were brought up and they were never flagged.

4 So, how do the Commissioners throw the -- how do we as
5 the worker bees, throw the red flag when we see this, this kind of behavior?

6 And it shouldn't be in the DPO, that's after the fact.

7 If we've got a problem with a current project we're in, we
8 should be able to go talk to somebody and say, hey, someone's putting budget
9 and schedule ahead of safety.

10 That's my comment, thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN NIEH: I think simply stated, it's what
12 Stephanie Morrow and Molly Keith Forsyth said, we have to prioritize safety
13 as our top focus.

14 We are going to do our work with safety in mind and we're
15 going to be more efficient. We can do both and we do both by eliminating the
16 unnecessary things that slow us down.

17 But what I heard Commissioner Crowell's chat with was you
18 got to raise the issues, please raise these issues.

19 We do not want anything like that to happen, as the
20 questioner is asking here.

21 So, I think it's important that we have a strong safety culture,
22 that we create the environment where we do want to move faster than we
23 have before.

24 We know that there are inefficiencies in our process and
25 we're going after those things.

26 We know and we have risk tools that help us prioritize the

1 areas of our work that are most important to safety.

2 We know we've got to spend more time there and less on
3 the things, as Nick Floyd said, on the things that really don't impact safety at
4 all.

5 We can do this, but how we avoid that is you, you have to
6 be the ones that raise the issues up to your leaders.

7 The leaders have to be the ones that talk cross-functionally
8 to make sure we do not make bad decisions.

9 I know this agency can do it, we have that in our DNA.

10 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: And the leaders need to
11 encourage the feedback from their staff and their employees.

12 And I don't think anyone in the Agency should have any, you
13 know, fear of retaliation or recrimination for raising anything.

14 But if you do, for one reason or another, there's other
15 avenues, including availing yourself of open doors with the Commission.

16 You know, that shouldn't be your first stop necessarily, but
17 some situations require it.

18 But I think I speak for all my Commissioners and colleagues,
19 and Commissioner Weaver as well that, I mean, I've never turned down an
20 open door since I've been here and I've always benefitted value from them.

21 But if we're just having a series of open doors and not
22 addressing these at lower levels, we've got an issue, too.

23 So, practice what we preach and I think we'll be in good
24 shape.

25 COMMISSIONER MARZANO: I'll kind of draw on my prior
26 experience as a senior reactor operator.

1 There are certainly moments where you're having to
2 be -- you are faced with production pressure, coming out of an outage is one
3 of those extremely challenging parts.

4 So, what is -- what do you do in those moments, you know,
5 from the licensee side?

6 And it's going back to the fundamentals, it's looking at safety
7 culture and really, what are the elements of a safety culture?

8 And what they are there to do is to kind of frame up the kind
9 of behaviors that you need in these very stressful, challenging times.

10 And so, it's getting back to those first principles, in my mind,
11 that are going to save a lot.

12 Communication, not being siloed.

13 You know, one of the goals of the reorganization is to break
14 down some of those artificial barriers that may exist within our structure.

15 And that's certainly another element, a very strong approach
16 to avoiding, you know, mistakes or unintended mistakes that somebody else
17 could have caught.

18 And, you know, one of the things I think that we're going to
19 have to do as an Agency, once we get past this 14300 rulemaking effort, is
20 really kind of start to have a lot more conversations cross-functionally where
21 there have been teams that have been working diligently to get these rules
22 out, you know, kind of sharing those results more widely.

23 So, we kind of continue to have this, you know, continuous
24 improvement aspect of our culture and really exercising that in the wake of
25 this effort to ensure that we don't run into those types of challenges.

26 CHAIRMAN NIEH: I want to just share one other thought

1 that came to mind here, and you touched on it, Commissioner Marzano, as
2 well.

3 You are not in isolation in your work.

4 If you feel stuck or concerned about an issue or confused or
5 you don't understand something, expand the team, talk to your peers, talk to
6 your supervisor, you're not in isolation.

7 We can't have these decisions made, especially if you are
8 unsure about something in isolation.

9 So important.

10 And a quick story I'll share with you, I was just at the general
11 conference last week or the week before, I can't remember at this point, but I
12 was talking to Mike Finnerty, the head regulator from the Office of Nuclear
13 Regulation in the United Kingdom.

14 As you heard in the video, they are making huge changes
15 in their regulatory programs just like ours.

16 And he shared with me that they were not sure if they were
17 moving in the right direction, and talking to other regulators that are doing
18 things similarly help build confidence, help share experience.

19 So, expand the team if you're unsure.

20 We do not want to let this Agency make a bad decision.

21 We have a huge Agency with incredible resources available
22 to us and I'm confident that the staff and the leaders can get to the right
23 answers.

24 MR. KING: And I just wanted to add, you know, thank you
25 for the question.

26 It's particularly important, you know, in the current

1 environment, we hear from staff and internationally at the General
2 Conference.

3 I heard from other regulators, how are you ensuring that
4 you're focused on safety when you got this focus on efficiency and delivering
5 for results?

6 One thing I'll add is, the meeting advocate role, which now
7 we're trying to implement more broadly, part of the role of the meeting
8 advocate is to ensure there isn't something that's unsaid during the meetings.

9 It's also an expectation that leaders across the Agency,
10 that's part of your performance management.

11 It's the expectation that you actively solicit, hey, are we
12 missing some view in the room as we're debating an issue?

13 So, it's more, it's not just left to you as an individual as you're
14 doing your individual review.

15 Of course, we want you to raise those issues, but it's also
16 when we get together in group meetings, we need to make sure we're really
17 soliciting, is there something not being said that needs to be said?

18 Thanks.

19 MS. GLENN: Thank you.

20 All right, I want to say we're doing a great job, thanks to
21 everyone that's raising your hand virtually and in the regions.

22 With that, we're going to go to the auditorium.

23 And then, after the auditorium, we're going to go over to
24 Region IV.

25 And if you would, share your name and what office you're
26 in.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. GLEAVES: Can you hear me?

3 MS. GLENN: We can.

4 MR. GLEAVES: Billy Gleaves, OAR.

5 So, I read through LEAD, I have some comments on that,
6 but I think one of the comments was led by the region about the way I heard
7 it was history. Okay?

8 I also heard Vic talk about standing on the shoulders of
9 giants.

10 How do we learn faster? How do we not repeat mistakes
11 of the past?

12 You have to go back and look at the history, it's broad, it's
13 deep, it's rich.

14 There's a lot of things people know about Davis-Besse, do
15 they do they know about potential loss of cooling event because the MOV is
16 the Davis-Besse?

17 They know about why containment's cracked, why the large
18 dry containment's cracked at Davis-Besse and Crystal River.

19 Do you know about the Peach Bottom?

20 Like one thing that we're talking about right here that I don't
21 hear is the growth of the industry.

22 I remember Commissioner Selin saying that he thought that
23 economics was -- could potentially lead safety at utilities.

24 And he was, I think, widely regarded as a heretic for that
25 comment, but I think he was proven to be wise.

26 What happened at Philadelphia Electric Company when

1 they were developing Peach Bottom and Limerick at the same time?

2 When they were developing Limerick, Peach Bottom went
3 down.

4 That was Selin's comment about economics being
5 actualized.

6 I was there, I saw them, I was there before, during, and after
7 the shutdown.

8 And a two-year shutdown forced by the NRC, do we know
9 here that this has happened?

10 The NRC has actually taken action to shut down in order to
11 shut down for two years.

12 The point is, all of this history is very, very important, and
13 we learn faster and better if we don't make those mistakes in the past and we
14 have that benefit.

15 I can go on and on about siting and all kinds of issues.

16 So, I challenge the staff, please go back and look, a lot of
17 these documents are available in ADAMS.

18 You can come talk to me, you can do whatever that you
19 want.

20 We have a historian, they've written books, go back and
21 read them.

22 Second is, I heard comments and I'm going to try to reflect
23 what I think, if I can synthesize what the staff might think about comments that
24 you made, Chairman, on the collection of things that might be inhibiting our
25 work.

26 That's all I think I'm going to say, great and wonderful, see,

1 but how is it collected and how is it synthesized and how is it conglomerated?

2 How do we track this office of dumb ideas?

3 I'm not going to suggest, but there should be an ombudsman

4 that collects dumb ideas, things that we do.

5 But is that one way to do it? Why don't we model what

6 we're doing in the -- what the industry we required to be done in the industry,

7 a corrective action program?

8 Why do we not have -- which goes to accountability, that

9 which is something I don't see in LEAD.

10 MS. GLENN: Mr. Gleaves, I apologize --

11 MR. GLEAVES: So, you've got all these things together.

12 MS. GLENN: -- for interrupting --

13 MR. GLEAVES: Thank you, I'm sorry.

14 MS. GLENN: Yes.

15 MR. GLEAVES: Thank you.

16 MS. GLENN: Thank you.

17 COMMISSIONER MARZANO: There's a couple of things

18 that I want to try and get at your question/comment.

19 So, I'll say the corrective action program, but I want to turn

20 right now to, I think, you know, what do we get at the problem about the

21 history?

22 And this comes down to knowledge management and our

23 capacity to share it and pass it along.

24 You know, one of the things that the Commission did as part

25 of the reorganization was with the training organization under research.

26 And I think, when I look at this move and what training

1 organizations do, either for the Navy nuclear propulsion program or in the fleet,
2 you know, they're much more oriented around, you know, the keeper of
3 standards and the keeper of knowledge for the site, for the plant, and
4 everything else.

5 And that goes beyond just what's on a PID -- or PID, and it's
6 getting into that kind of more tribal knowledge space.

7 So, what I think part of this orientation about training and
8 maybe a history course is a very good addition if we can start to push for that.

9 But really, you know, the Energy Reorganization Act and the
10 Research Office, you know, it is one of these that's responsive to the program
11 offices and those needs.

12 You know, I think that there's a little bit of room there for the
13 Research Office to be leading and looking forward as opposed -- and still, you
14 know, fulfilling a statutory responsibility to support the programs.

15 But I think it could take a much more, you know, forward
16 posture in doing that.

17 So, that's, I think, one tool and structural tool that will help
18 us in that regard.

19 In terms of a corrective action program here at the NRC, I
20 think it would serve a fundamentally different purpose than the industry.

21 And so, you know, people hear CAP and that means
22 something to them because they understand CAP programs in the industry.

23 But I think a CAP for the NRC would, you know, be more
24 oriented around our mission.

25 And one of the elements of this is OpEx sharing is the ability
26 and a communication tool, you know, for folks that may be experiencing

1 something in the region in one part of the country and make sure that that is
2 widely disseminated and quickly.

3 So, you know, maybe developing issues can be spread and
4 adjudicated quicker across the Agency and across the country.

5 So, that's just a couple ideas that I think that, you know, get
6 at some of the concerns that you're raising.

7 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Thanks for the commentary, Billy.

8 I didn't hear a question in there, but you stimulated a lot of
9 thought.

10 So, a few things I want to share with the Agency here.

11 First, your point about learning from the past is super
12 important.

13 I'm having a number of discussions with other members of
14 the Commission, including Commissioner Weaver, who's not here, about how
15 can we learn from our experiences in the past, particularly in the area of
16 licensing.

17 Like, let's be realistic, right?

18 We have implemented, or tried to implement, risk informed
19 licensing programs in the past that, honestly, didn't go that well for the first
20 movers, right?

21 And it created a barrier for others to want to adopt that.

22 I think it's important that we understand what worked and
23 what didn't.

24 And I know we did some stuff with the Advance Act to help
25 get ourselves more efficient.

26 We're going to look at some improvements to our guidance.

1 But look, if you've worked with me for a long time, the things
2 are important, you know I'm going to want to see details and specifics about
3 what we're going to do and who's going to do what and by when. Right?

4 I think that's the discipline we need to learn from the things
5 in the past, whether it's an ombudsman, I'm not really sure, the staff's got to
6 figure out how best to capture those lessons.

7 As far as the CAP program goes, I think the self-aware,
8 self-correcting, I brought my LEAD brochure with me today in case I needed
9 to reference it, but the self-aware, self-correcting behavior that's in here, that
10 is going to help us do what CAP will -- a CAP program would drive us to do.

11 I don't know if many of you know this, we actually tried to do
12 a CAP program here at the Agency. Okay?

13 Region I, you remember when I was a DRP Director, it drove
14 the leadership team bonkers because we were reviewing low-level issues on
15 a weekly basis, it was death by a thousand paper cuts.

16 If we tried to do that again here, I'm not convinced that it
17 would actually save us time.

18 So, I really think the LEAD framework is going to help us be
19 a self-aware, self-correcting organization.

20 There's a rapid lessons learned process that the staff is
21 putting in place.

22 Let's give that a try before we try putting in, you know, a
23 super bureaucracy with a corrective action program, because I feel like if we
24 tried to do that, we would make it a lot harder than it really needs to be and it
25 would just distract us from the things that are most important.

26 MS. GLENN: Okay, thank you so much for that.

1 So, we're going to go over to Region IV next.

2 And I do want to remind everyone as we're bringing our
3 questions, please do be mindful to give yourself about a minute.

4 If you have multiple questions, ask the one that is the
5 burning question first because we may not -- we won't be able to take multiple
6 questions at a time, but you can get back in line, of course.

7 We do want to hear as many new voices as possible.

8 So again, give yourself about one minute and then, watch
9 for my friendly waves, if you see my friendly wave or if you see me pop on
10 your Teams screen, or if your MS. GLENN in the region gives you a friendly
11 wave for me, please do adhere to that and honor it.

12 We thank you for that and thank you for your grace too.

13 All right, so we're going to go over to Region 4, Region 4,
14 we're ready for you.

15 MR. GRAU: Good morning, my name is Daniel Grau,
16 Region 4.

17 First off, I wanted to say thank you for these meetings, I
18 really appreciate the chance to get to ask the Commissioners questions and
19 hear y'all's feedback on issues that we're having as the staff.

20 Second off, Chairman Nieh, I want to say I'm upset with you
21 because you stole our branch chief as soon as we got to the reorganization.

22 Congratulations, Jesse Rollins on getting to be appointed to
23 Chairman Nieh's office, I know you're going to do great things for him, but not
24 cool, bro.

25 Anyways, my question is, can you guys explain briefly kind
26 of the differences between the Advance Act and Executive Order 14300?

1 I know we got -- we've met both of those requirements and
2 I just wanted to see kind of where the difference is between those two.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN NIEH: I'll give a very quick explanation of the
5 differences and then, I know, either Commissioner Marzano or Commissioner
6 Crowell and Commissioner Wright may have some thoughts on that as well.

7 First, I want to address the Jesse issue.

8 I've had a chance to travel with him, and I love having him
9 in my office. He's done a great job so far helping me with some policy issues,
10 but he's got some issues that I'll share with you offline after this meeting that
11 you should be aware about. Okay?

12 (LAUGHTER)

13 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Okay.

14 So, the way I see the Advance Act and the Executive Order,
15 how they're different, the Advance Act was a great piece of bipartisan
16 legislation that set the compass direction for predictable and efficient
17 regulation.

18 And it put some specific things in there related to, you know,
19 fee reduction for advanced reactors and things like that, it had some very
20 explicit things plus the hiring authorities.

21 Those were great measures.

22 What the Executive Order did was, it built on that, and it put
23 in very specific actions that needed to be taken immediately. Okay?

24 The Advance Act, by itself, might not have gotten us to the
25 point where we are taking a wholesale review of all our regulations.

26 So, what the Executive Order did was to bring that specificity

1 and urgency for immediate actions that the Agency would take.

2 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: Yes, I agree with the
3 Chairman that it builds on it and it gave that specificity, but it also builds on
4 policy development that has happened over even before the Advance Act, so,
5 it was another step.

6 And what I want to highlight, again, I've said this before, but
7 the Nuclear Energy Innovation Capabilities Act was the one that basically
8 framed up and established all the MOUs that we have in place today with the
9 Department of Energy.

10 And really, what the EO 14300, alongside the Executive
11 Orders that were aimed at accelerating authorization at DOE, Department of
12 Defense, et cetera, for all this, putting more emphasis on the programs that
13 were put in place before.

14 So, the establishment of the National Reactor Innovation
15 Center, really what I think the Executive Order did was put a huge spotlight on
16 the reactor testing and demonstration piece of that that had not necessarily
17 been coalescing in I think the way that Congress and the folks that wrote that
18 first bill really intended.

19 And so, now, we're in this moment where that partnership is
20 being exercised, I think a lot more consistent with its original intent.

21 And so, there are some differences, but actually
22 difference -- don't look at it from a from being different, but a continuation of
23 policy and providing a finer point, more direction on what Congress has been
24 trying to do over the past few years.

25 MS. GLENN: All right, thank you so much.

26 So, I do see that we have a person here in the room and

1 they've been standing for a while, so, we're going to inject you to the queue.

2 Please go ahead and ask your question. Please share
3 your name and your office.

4 MS. SUGGS: Good morning, thank you so much,
5 LaDonna Suggs, the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards in
6 MSS, but out of the Region II office in Atlanta, Georgia.

7 First, I'd like to thank those that put this together, I'm really
8 thrilled about the format and the video.

9 I was very inspired to hear from our congressional partners
10 as well as our international partners, it was inspiring for me, hopefully, it was
11 for everyone else as well.

12 So, my question, we've talked about the pace of work, we've
13 talked about the potential burnout, we've talked a lot about the Advanced Act
14 and the Executive Order 14300, which has taken, someone said, one of you,
15 I think, a Herculean effort, I think it might have been Commissioner Crowell.

16 How -- what are -- can you share your thoughts on how do
17 we inculcate that mind set so that we don't find ourself here a decade from
18 now saying, okay, now we got to take another wholesale look at everything
19 and, you know, run whomever may still be here at the Agency, probably me,
20 you know, through this process again, how do we get that mind set?

21 Maybe it's the LEAD model and inculcating those behaviors.

22 Maybe it's a lot of the other things that we've already talked
23 about.

24 But just, if you share your thoughts on how do we prevent
25 ourselves from being in this moment, the next generation of nuclear regulators
26 from being here again?

1 I'd love to hear your thoughts on that.

2 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Yes, I'll just say really quickly, and I've
3 said this before, really starting at the RIC, you know, with three priorities I'm
4 carrying with me as Chairman.

5 The first is, you know, core mission delivery with safety,
6 efficiency, and speed.

7 But the second two are the ones that are going to get at the
8 heart of your question, LaDonna.

9 Thanks for waiting so patiently, by the way, is one a priority
10 that we place on leadership and operational excellence, that's what this is
11 about.

12 And the third priority is strengthening our culture of
13 continuous improvement. Right?

14 There are things that high-performing organizations are
15 doing in the industry that we regulate.

16 We are going to benchmark those things, take those best
17 practices, and bring them into our Agency.

18 The goal for us at the Commission level, the senior staff,
19 and all of you in the room, and all the people that you're mentoring and
20 developing, is to embed the LEAD framework, how we do business, and that
21 culture of continuous improvement, and how we carry ourselves forward.
22 Right?

23 We have to train the next generation.

24 It cannot be 10 years from now, 20 years from now that we
25 have another bipartisan act or acts of Congress, another Presidential
26 Executive Order that demands the NRC to improve its performance.

1 We have to improve on our own and we do that when
2 leaders are aligned on what excellence look like -- on what excellence looks
3 like, and we hold ourselves and our team accountable and we give them the
4 resources to execute with confidence. Right?

5 We have to be clear with our workforce and I think the LEAD
6 framework and building the culture of continuous improvement is going to help
7 us get there.

8 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: I'll just build on that a little
9 bit.

10 You know, the better we undertake this effort, the less likely
11 we'll have to do it again in the future, especially if we, you know, continue to
12 have that culture of continuous improvement.

13 But this effort is Herculean and unprecedented at the same
14 time.

15 And I think one of the other best ways to ensure we're don't
16 have to do this again is trying to get this Herculean effort as right as possible.

17 And that is a tough -- that's a tall order because we're
18 working on -- it's voluminous, that's an understatement, we're working on very
19 short time frames.

20 There are disconnects that aren't anyone's fault, but they
21 need to be identified and corrected.

22 The more durable we can make these final rules, the better
23 off we're all going to be, but it's not a given.

24 It's going to take everyone's time and overtime and external
25 folks' time and input because it is monumental, but we all have a very vested
26 stake in the outcome.

1 I would hate to see us have gone through this effort, not
2 done the due diligence we need, and you know, have any of these efforts
3 reversed or we have to go back and start from scratch for either process foul
4 or some other substantive issues.

5 So, I'm not saying it's easy, this has been a hard one for all
6 of us.

7 We've been working our butts off on the Commission level,
8 but the more we can, you know, perfect is probably too much, but durable and
9 workable is a goal we can meet and we need to meet it if we don't want to
10 have to find ourselves here again.

11 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: One of the things that I think
12 is very important is for us to stay out of our silo.

13 For many years, we were -- it was -- we were the NRC.
14 Right?

15 We're just an independent regulator, leave us alone,
16 everything's fine here.

17 But what we are is just one part of the body and we have to
18 be able to work and understand what's going on with other agencies in the
19 federal government, who we have a relationship with, what's happening in the
20 industry.

21 We've got to learn from them through either EMPO or from
22 our drop-ins with the utilities.

23 What are, you know, what are their programs look like going
24 future, you know, for their types of generation that they're looking for?

25 What, you know, what is the goal of an administration that
26 happens to be if we're not working with these people, understanding how what

1 we're doing impacts them, what can we do better internally?

2 The continuous improvement point that the CHAIRMAN was
3 talking to, if we're not doing that constantly, then we're behind and then, we're
4 going to get back into that old, well, this is the way we've always done it.

5 And what we learned is the way we've always success.

6 We have to be willing to be introspective, challenge
7 ourselves, and make those improvements constantly, and if we're not, then
8 the questioner's concern is going to be a reality.

9 COMMISSIONER MARZANO: I'll be really quick, I think
10 we need to move at the pace of innovation.

11 Technology is moving very quickly.

12 I think this effort to go through 10 CFR right now has been
13 very timely because of, again, just where the technology is running into friction
14 with our existing regulations.

15 We can't afford to have rulemaking efforts that go for 10
16 years in response to policy because by the time that the rule goes final, it's
17 already stale.

18 So, we must kind of look at some of the strengths of what
19 we're doing right now, and the speed at which we're doing it, take that to heart,
20 and have a more forward-looking vision about what's coming to us, and be
21 willing to move through the rulemaking processes and develop policy and
22 change policy as the technology demands.

23 MS. GLENN: Okay, all right, thank you for that.

24 So, we are going to go over to Teams next, thank you for
25 your patience, Brett. We're elevating you.

26 As we're doing that, if you all could help me in the

1 auditorium, those that are in the middle row, would you squeeze in just a little
2 bit? Leave one to two open chairs on the end, that's the throw with Jeff and
3 Billy at the end, y'all just squeeze in.

4 There you go, that way, if you're waiting at the microphone
5 and need to sit for a moment, you can do that, I just want to give us a little
6 accommodation there.

7 All right, so, we're going to go over to Teams.

8 Brett, thank you for turning on your camera, we're ready.

9 Please also let us know what office you're from.

10 PARTICIPANT: So, thank you, Patricia.

11 I'm originally from Region I, but right now I'm with the Office
12 of General Counsel, but technically OGC is part of OGC, so, either way, this
13 is -- it amounts to this.

14 So, thank you, Commissioners, for this opportunity to ask a
15 question.

16 This has been top of mind for me recently as we've
17 conducted two mandatory hearings over the past two weeks, and we actually
18 have another one scheduled for this evening that I'll be attending.

19 How does public engagement fit within the LEAD
20 framework?

21 I struggle with this question, as it isn't immediately clear to
22 me how public engagement can be understood in the lens or through the lens
23 of the guiding rubrics that have been discussed this morning, that being a
24 focus on efficiency and effectiveness, as well as a focus on safety significant
25 actions.

26 So, how would the Commission like the staff to think about

1 public engagement?

2 And to be clear, by public engagement, I mean, specifically,
3 the hard work of answering questions posed by local community members,
4 working through their concerns, and building relationships of trust with those
5 who live in the vicinities of the facilities we're licensing.

6 Thank you very much, again, for this opportunity, I
7 appreciate it.

8 COMMISSIONER MARZANO: Please, sir.

9 And Jeremy, kind of correct me if I'm wrong, but, you know,
10 when I think about public engagement in the LEAD framework, you know, the
11 LEAD framework is based foundationally on our values and principles as an
12 organization.

13 And that is, you know, foundational as part of our blood, I
14 should say, and so, the LEAD framework is built off of that as a pillar of the
15 NRC's responsibility.

16 So, seeing within that, you know, Brett, to answer your
17 question, I know that we've talked extensively about, you know, our public
18 engagement, how we move forward, I'll save some of the details of that
19 conversation for another time.

20 But I think it is core to the LEAD framework itself and should
21 be part of how we think about moving within it.

22 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Yes, I agree with what Commissioner
23 Marzano said.

24 And look, I'm referencing it here because I haven't
25 committed this thing to memory yet, but what I will say is that, when you look
26 at the behaviors of setting long-term directions, setting the expectations for

1 how we perform, our work is the public's business, and that is not going to
2 change.

3 So, we have to, again, set that long-term direction that this
4 is how we're going to do business and the high standards for our performance.

5 I'll share with you, Brett, the feedback I've received from
6 those that have seen or observed the new mandatory hearing process has
7 been very favorable, I've heard a lot of favorable feedback.

8 I would love to hear other feedback if people see otherwise,
9 because that will help the Commission really, you know, guide its
10 decision-making going forward and how we ensure that we preserve the
11 public's opportunity to participate in these processes.

12 But the thing that we do and the high standards that we put
13 in place with our public meetings, our briefings for our external stakeholders,
14 specifically, particularly, with these rules that we've developed, I think the NRC
15 staff has done an incredible job being proactive in communicating about what
16 we're doing, what these rules are, what they aren't.

17 And obviously, we're working under very different policies
18 within this Administration on our ability to do a lot of things in advance of
19 publishing these rules, but we are doing everything we can to make sure that
20 the public that we protect and serve can have a window into what we're doing.

21 So, I think it fits well into this management model, the LEAD
22 framework.

23 If there's ways to improve it, you ought to raise that up with
24 your leaders and give the team an opportunity to improve on this thing.

25 This is not going to be set in stone, this must be a living
26 document. It has to improve and we have to be able to adapt how we use it

1 as circumstances change in our environment.

2 MS. GLENN: Okay, thank you.

3 I wasn't sure if Commissioner Wright was putting up his mic
4 or not.

5 Okay, thank you.

6 We're going to go over to Region II, Region II, we're ready
7 for you with your question.

8 Please do share your name and we know you're in Region
9 II.

10 So, if you want to tell us what office you're associated with,
11 that would be great.

12 MR. SUBER: Yes, my name is Gregory Suber and I am
13 the Acting Director for Reactive Projects.

14 And of course, we're in CNRI, which is the backbone, heart,
15 and soul of the NRC, if anybody had a question about that.

16 But my question really has to do with the technical training
17 center.

18 I'm not sure if everybody is aware of what a tremendous
19 resource that is and what a great organization it is with respect to bringing
20 people in really at both the entry level and at the mid-level, near career level.

21 I just wanted to -- and also wanted to state that I think
22 moving it under research was probably a wonderful strategic decision.

23 I just wanted to know what the Commission's vision is for
24 TTC moving forward?

25 And seeing that both the NRC and the industry are both
26 challenged with training a new generation of operators on an industry side and

1 regulators on the NRC side, is there any thought of expanding collaboration
2 in technical training, and in regulatory training, making classes open and more
3 diverse to people outside of the NRC, and further building and expanding the
4 TTC to not only do training for the U.S., but even more training internationally?

5 CHAIRMAN NIEH: I'll start, and I know this is a topic that's
6 important to other of my colleagues.

7 I want to give credit where credit's due, Commissioner
8 Marzano was a thought leader for moving the Technical Training Center under
9 the Office of Research.

10 I saw that, I was like, brilliant idea. It took me 0.1
11 nanoseconds to say I'm going to support that fully.

12 I'm just going to share with you my vision for what I see the
13 Technical Training Center as just one member of the Commission.

14 I was down there recently and was so impressed with the
15 work that they're doing in training our oversight staff.

16 Also, the work that they do with the Agreement States, as
17 well, really important for our Agreement State partners, particularly in this
18 period of change here.

19 And we also do, at the TTC, things for our international
20 colleagues, as well.

21 And I remember looking at Jesse here, the guy with the
22 questionable coffee beverages that he drinks and his musical taste, he and I
23 were doing, you know, using radiation protection instruments and, you know,
24 going through some of the training.

25 So, I really learned a lot there.

26 But, you know, the observation for me about TTC is that the

1 vast majority of that program of work is related to our oversight program.

2 When I think of our core business, what is it? You guys
3 know it, right? It's licensing, oversight, and rulemaking.

4 Those are core business, and I would put the emergency
5 response and the oversight part of what we do.

6 I think there's untapped potential for what we can do in other
7 areas of our core business outside just the oversight program.

8 For example, our governing standard for our safety
9 decisions reasonable assurance.

10 How do we train people to make those judgments?

11 Our rules that we're making now, they're all risk-informed,
12 performance-based, we're moving away from prescriptive requirements.

13 And when you're in a risk-informed, performance-based
14 architecture, in my opinion, the most important skill sets are leadership and
15 judgment.

16 That's what we need to sharpen to make sure we start doing
17 and making the right decisions when we implement these programs.

18 So, I think, in my view, I think there's a role for the TTC to
19 really help strengthen our Agency well beyond just what we do in the oversight
20 program.

21 How do we make those risk-informed, performance-based
22 decisions if you're a technical reviewer in NRR, OAR, or NMSS, right?

23 Those type of things, I think there's an opportunity for TTC
24 to do that.

25 And I feel encouraged because, when I met with the TTC
26 leadership, they're already thinking about these things.

1 So, I think it's a great resource, to me, I think it's a world
2 class training platform that we have here in the United States for our regulator,
3 for us, the regulator.

4 I don't think there's any other nuclear regulator in the world
5 that has a facility like ours.

6 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes, I'm going to associate
7 myself with your comments right there.

8 I see a huge, huge opportunity for the Agreement State
9 program and to change the way we've been doing things.

10 Just got our 41st state, they're going to be more.

11 With every state that comes in, the training goes up and our,
12 you know, what we do before they were in Agreement State goes down.

13 So, it's going to be great opportunities for us to work closer
14 with the Agreement States on the training processes.

15 I also, you know, have used it myself, you know, I went down
16 and took a couple of days training to learn what the resident inspectors are
17 taught so that I could get a little bit more context on what I'm doing when I go
18 into the plants and what I'm reviewing as a Commissioner.

19 The TTC is just, I mean, they're a gem out there, and we
20 can envision them to be whatever we need them to be, and I believe
21 they're -- they can do it.

22 We're just going to need to provide them the resources.

23 One other thing that I have talked to universities about, and
24 I think I shared it with some of the TTC people a couple of years ago, when
25 they're doing these nuclear degrees that they're doing at the universities,
26 nuclear engineering or whatever, one of the things that is missing in the

1 programs, I think, is a three-hour course that the TTC could be involved in with
2 the university in license reviewing.

3 Because the people that are coming out don't understand
4 that part of it.

5 To get exposed in either a Master's program or in their
6 general degrees might be something that we might have an opportunity there.

7 COMMISSIONER MARZANO: I don't want to get into all of
8 the reasons why I thought that this was going to be a great idea, but I think
9 one thing to highlight, you know, being on shift at a plant as an SRO, you
10 know, you are about two years.

11 It takes about two years to train a replacement, somebody
12 that can get on shift and they can they can do the job with a license in hand to
13 help the watch bill.

14 And the same is true here in developing the regulatory craft,
15 it takes time.

16 And so, how do you actually go at that long pole of the tent,
17 which is developing a regulator, and focus on training, and having a training
18 program that is adaptable to the needs of the Agency as they change?

19 Another reason for this is, you know, our mission is
20 changing where our focus is, is changing, and people's jobs are going to be
21 affected by that as well.

22 And so, the TTC is also this point at which, you know, a tool
23 for professional development, so looking internally, there's a number of
24 different things.

25 But I think what we need to look at in the future is, how do
26 we support the TTC in meeting those needs?

1 There's a lot of great ideas that are floating around, there's
2 lots of opportunities developing those ideas, using a systematic approach to
3 training, the ADDIE process, those kinds of things, we have all these tools.

4 We know how to train people to take on highly, highly
5 complex technical subject matter and engage.

6 So again, the basis for this is, it takes time to bring in the
7 folks that are going to have the ability to, you know, be proficient and bring the
8 regulatory craft to bear a focus on training is going to help with that.

9 CHAIRMAN NIEH: And sorry, Patricia, one point that
10 Gregory asked about, you know, can we learn from the industry here?

11 The TTC has already been put in touch with NPO, you know,
12 they run the National Academies for Nuclear Training.

13 So, Bo Pham, I don't see him in the room here, but he's been
14 put in contact with NPO to see any learnings that we can have from the
15 industry and how they have continued to improve, develop, and perfect
16 training for the existing fleet today.

17 Thank you.

18 MS. GLENN: With that, we're going to go back to the
19 auditorium.

20 Thank you for your patience and taking advantage of that
21 seat, we're ready for you.

22 Go ahead, share your name and your office if you could,
23 please.

24 MR. CAPONI: Thank you for making the space for the
25 seat, that was very helpful.

26 Hi, my name is Louis Caponi, I work in the Office of

1 Advanced Reactors.

2 Thank you so much for taking the time, this is my favorite
3 meeting of the year, and I think this dialogue is really important.

4 So, thank you for making yourselves available to the staff.

5 Over the past year and a half, we've had a lot of challenges
6 to certain safety nets in the way that we do our work.

7 There was an Executive Order passed early last year that
8 pulled the NRC under the existing OIRA review process for actions that are
9 deemed significant.

10 So, guidance rulemaking, adding a step to some of our
11 processes.

12 We've had increased collaboration with Department of
13 Energy and other federal agencies, as you all have discussed.

14 And there was a more recent Supreme Court decision that
15 essentially approved the President to remove Agency heads, even those that
16 are confirmed by the Senate to serve a term.

17 And so, each one of these has sort of changed my
18 perspective of how the NRC is an independent regulatory body.

19 And to Commissioner Wright's point, how do we remain an
20 independent Agency that is not siloed and that is still coordinating across the
21 federal government so that we can maintain an agile and efficient workforce
22 while still fulfilling our statutory requirements as a regulatory body?

23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Passing that one to me, okay.

25 (LAUGHTER)

26 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Great, great question, Louis.

1 What I see happening right now is a deliberate and
2 coordinated effort on the federal government's part to re-establish America's
3 leadership in nuclear energy. That is what's happening, right?

4 Do you see the Executive Order that built on what came out
5 of the Legislative Branch to have the NRC be more predictable and efficient,
6 and efficient in how it does work?

7 President Trump's order put specific actions for us to work
8 on, that, in my opinion, wasn't taking away our safety net, it's saying America
9 needs more energy.

10 America needs to lead the world again.

11 And nuclear is seen as essential by the American people.

12 And NRC, you have a role in making that possible.

13 So, I see that coming together as a coordinated effort.

14 What's happening is the Department of Energy is investing
15 in and developing the industrial base around the entire nuclear fuel cycle, front
16 end to back end.

17 What the NRC is doing is preparing the predictable and
18 efficient licensing frameworks to make that industrial base possible.

19 Two agencies, each working in their own separate lane, but
20 headed to the same destination of America leading the world in nuclear energy
21 and providing the energy that our country is asking for right now.

22 So, what we can do in our role, our technical independence
23 remains solid. Right?

24 Nobody is telling us what safety findings to make in the
25 BWRX 300 construction permit. Right? That's a decision we own.

26 I know that I and my colleagues on the Commission, we own

1 our decisions related to all these rules that come up.

2 And we've had instances where we may not have all agreed
3 on what the final rule looks like, but we work through the process, right, that
4 the Commission has in creating a proposed rule, and ultimately, a final rule.

5 But we are working together in a coordinated effort as part
6 of the federal government.

7 That's different than what it's been before.

8 But the other thing I would share with your question, Louis,
9 here about safety, that's not changing.

10 As Commissioner Wright always says, that is our North Star,
11 that is what we're focused on.

12 But we are doing everything we can to really make this
13 moment possible as an entire government effort working together.

14 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: I'll take the short straw on
15 this one and add a little perspective to the Chairman's.

16 You know, while the nature of the NRC as a, you know,
17 historic independent Agency may have changed, you know, in character
18 somewhat here by the actions you mentioned.

19 I don't see that as impacting our independent decision
20 making.

21 So, as long as we are making independent decisions,
22 regardless of how you categorize this more broadly as an Agency or what the
23 Supreme Court says about, you know, who can hire and fire, if we are making
24 technically sound independent decisions, we can manage those dynamics.

25 If that starts to erode or does erode, then we have problems.

26 And if it manifests in safety issues, then we really have

1 problems.

2 I know, for my part, I look at a big part of my role as ensuring
3 that we maintain that independent decision making capacity.

4 But I always look to all of you to let us know when that may
5 be, you know, we may be missing something or our independent judgment is
6 not being considered appropriately.

7 COMMISSIONER MARZANO: Yes, I'll draw -- I'll take a
8 shorter straw.

9 You know, I think there's no denying that the Slaughter
10 decision really fundamentally altered the some of the balance of power in our
11 government and the role of Congress, roles of the Executive and these
12 decision makings or, you know, in independent agencies and the
13 management of them.

14 But these are things that are even above our pay grade as
15 well.

16 And so, you know, when I try and think about how to
17 navigate these moments, you know, look at our principles, look at our values,
18 and I check my actions against those every time.

19 And nothing, nobody can fault you for holding, you know,
20 those deeply held beliefs and those principles and what our organization's
21 mission and responsibilities are.

22 And that's what I continue to do every day, the decisions
23 that have been made above our pay grade should not affect that.

24 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: This is an extraordinary time.

25 Most of you know that I've umpired baseball for half a
26 century, and one of the things that a good umpire does is follow the rules.

1 Right?

2 And that's what the NRC does, we follow the rules, we
3 implement the law.

4 Congress and the Administration have battled over this,
5 they're going to continue to battle over it.

6 But our job is to do what is -- what the law says, and the
7 Supreme Court did make a determination there, we're going to follow the law.

8 We have, as a day-to-day operation of an Agency, we've
9 really never been an independent Agency, I wish they hadn't used that word.

10 We are separate, you know, but what we have, our
11 independent ability to make safety decisions has not been damaged at all.

12 And we're not, I agree with everything that both
13 Commissioner Crowell and the CHAIRMAN said there.

14 MS. GLENN: Thank you.

15 With that, I do see that we have a question in the auditorium
16 to my right.

17 And then, we will go over to the auditorium left.

18 And I do want to do a time check, we're at 11:44 so we have
19 about 10 minutes left for Q&A.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. PALMROSE: Hi, Donald Palmrose, Office of
22 Advanced Reactors.

23 I want to tear off of Commissioner Wright's comment about
24 understanding industry needs and that.

25 And what I've seen in the past is that it's been a very high
26 bar for technical staff to just attend conferences that industry has.

1 For example, as an ANS member, the annual ANS
2 conferences that they have where discussions like this happen.

3 And well, so, I would strongly recommend that we consider
4 having them more of an out and engagement with industry at these
5 conferences and get technical staff out there to observe their meetings, and
6 listen to what they're saying, and come back and report to us.

7 Because I think that's another way to get a better
8 understanding of the industry concerns and see where we're hitting the mark
9 or missing the mark, especially with all these changes that we're doing with
10 the 14300.

11 Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Since you mentioned my
13 name, I agree with you, I've always been one that understands that I'm not the
14 smartest guy in the room, and I learn best when I share conversations and
15 information with other people, and this is just another opportunity to do that.

16 And we can maintain our, quote, independence even in
17 those realms.

18 We can listen and learn, you don't necessarily have to agree
19 on everything, but there's no harm in listening and learning, no harm at all.

20 COMMISSIONER MARZANO: I'll say, when folks from the
21 NRC show up in these venues, people listen, too.

22 And so, I agree that our presence is particularly important.

23 And, you know, outside of the conference realm, you know,
24 there's a number of different benefits here.

25 One, bringing along more junior staff members to see and
26 kind of get some development and seeing how their day-to-day work impacts

1 in the broader industry.

2 But then, there is the direction setting and people look to the
3 NRC to understand what's going to -- what does the NRC think of our, you
4 know, this idea or that idea?

5 Going back to our cooperation with the Department of
6 Energy, you know, part of this, you know, DOE and NRC cooperation piece is
7 that sometimes DOE is going down a certain research path because they think
8 that that's where it's going to go.

9 But if their goal is commercialization, then maybe we have
10 some really good directional setting for them in terms of maybe they're going
11 to move to a different type of experiment or really kind of ultimately change
12 how they're approaching whatever problem.

13 So, we have extremely valuable input and expertise to bear
14 in all of these situations.

15 You know, standards bodies, that's another one where we
16 should be driving the conversation, international forums as well.

17 And so, we, you know, there is a there was a -- there's a
18 period of time early in the Administration where there is, you know, some
19 resetting of the policy, but I think that, you know, we're getting back to a place
20 where our participation should grow in these really important venues.

21 CHAIRMAN NIEH: The only thing I would really add to that
22 because, I think, in Donald's question, you know, the -- maybe the underlying
23 thought is can we increase NRC's ability to send more staff to these
24 professional conferences?

25 Obviously, there's things that we can do as members of the
26 Commission when we engage with the leadership of ANS or NEI and other

1 industry organizations, but I would certainly encourage the staff leadership to,
2 you know, maybe talk about opportunities.

3 Is there a way to perhaps get NRC reduced conference fee
4 requirements to attend these conferences?

5 I think it's really important that we stay plugged into what's
6 happening in the regulatory and energy landscape because think about why
7 we ended up where we are today.

8 And perhaps maybe we were a bit too isolated in certain
9 areas. Right?

10 The drumbeat for change, it didn't just start beating the night
11 before the Executive Order was signed, it was beating for a very, very long
12 time.

13 So, I don't know, maybe there's something there where we
14 can talk with the leaders of ANS and NEI and others to see if there's some
15 way where they can make it easier for more staff.

16 Again, it's not going to be the entire Agency and it's got to
17 be up to the EDO and the leadership team to, you know, identify the right
18 athletes to go to these conferences, but it is very, very important to bring that
19 external awareness of what's happening in the regulatory environment back
20 to the Agency so that we can factor that in in how we do our work.

21 MS. GLENN: Thank you.

22 We'll go back to the room to my left with your question.

23 Please share your name again, hi Nicole, and your office,
24 too?

25 MS. MEDINA: Thank you.

26 My name is Nicole Cortez Medina, I am in the --

1 (OFF MICROPHONE COMMENTS)

2 MS. MEDINA: Yes.

3 (OFF MICROPHONE COMMENTS)

4 MS. MEDINA: Is that better?

5 My name is Nicole Cortez Medina and I'm in the Office of
6 Nuclear Materials, Security and Safeguards in the Division of Fuel Cycle.

7 And in a similar vein to the question that was just asked
8 about conferences, but more specifically, in the topic of training that you've
9 spoken about already, I wanted to ask if there will be higher prioritization for
10 external trainings?

11 Because I agree that there are a lot of very good internal
12 trainings and the TTC is excellent.

13 There's also a lot of focus on the reactor trainings, not so
14 much in fuel facility trainings.

15 So, a lot of those trainings, for us, come from external
16 trainings, which another point that I wanted to add is, after we've qualified, the
17 prioritization for training is lowered to three and four.

18 And I've spoken with inspectors and other technical
19 reviewers that have had the same problem I've been having where there's
20 external trainings that are difficult to coordinate with because the data call
21 happens much earlier on.

22 And then, by the time they're asking for registration, either
23 the window has closed or they cancel the training because they think that
24 there's not enough interest.

25 So, wanted to bring that to your attention and see if there is
26 possibly any space in the budget for those types of external training

1 opportunities?

2 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: I'll start this one off and I
3 think we may all have thoughts here.

4 Nicole, I appreciate you raising this issue, it's an important
5 one.

6 Let me take it backwards a little bit, in terms of like the
7 mechanics of how we decide who goes to what, when, and data calls and
8 timing, I trust Mike, and his team, and his office to figure out where the
9 roadblocks are and sort through that with y'all.

10 Those types of things seem like they should be manageable
11 to me, they just need to be proactively managed.

12 But I am most acutely worried about this shortcoming in
13 terms of training and engagement on the fuel cycle area, more than I am on
14 the reactor side, because we have a lot of, you know, past knowledge and
15 folks who are, you know, have been or are experienced in the reactor side.

16 The fuel cycle is a whole other story with, you know, our fuel
17 cycles, you know, we haven't done much new in the fuel cycle front end in this
18 country.

19 We're well overdue and now we're going at, you know,
20 gangbusters pace to help establish that.

21 We need to have the requisite, you know, expertise and
22 insights and contemporary knowledge that will inform that effort, because just
23 as in the reactor space, we don't need any foot faults or, you know, incidents
24 happening in the fuel cycle space that will cause -- that will have the same
25 impact on this burgeoning renaissance as, you know, something specific in
26 the reactor space.

1 So, thank you for highlighting it and I hope we can find a
2 way to rectify it.

3 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Yes, the one thing I would add, too, I
4 think it's a great point that you raise and I certainly have trust in the EDO and
5 the senior leadership team in identifying the priority training needs, whether
6 it's internal or external.

7 I just want to share with you a perspective personally.

8 You know, I've been working in nuclear energy for, you
9 know, coming up on 34 years now.

10 When I think of what were the most impactful trainings that
11 I had in my career, I can probably narrow it down to a handful.

12 And the ones that were really impactful from a technical
13 standpoint were Navy Nuke Power School, TTC training I had as an inspector.

14 That was probably it from a technical standpoint.

15 Then, I think about, well, what external trainings did I take
16 over the years in my career?

17 I took a handful, not a lot, I didn't overdose on external
18 trainings, and honestly, the -- some of the ones I took sounded good when I
19 read the title in the training catalog, and then, when I got back a week later, it
20 was like I learned a handful of things which were helpful.

21 So, I want to make sure I'm clear, I'm not saying external
22 training's not valuable, but the things that were most valuable in my career
23 were the things I learned on the job.

24 You know, how to handle low risk, medium risk, or high risk
25 issue in the inspection program, how do I deal with that?

26 Where am I on that spectrum, right?

1 Going toe to toe with a licensee on a tough licensing issue,
2 right, it's not clear.

3 They think it's low risk, we think it's high risk, they think we
4 don't need to ask this question, we think we do.

5 Those experiences on how you carry out the regulatory
6 craft, especially when you go from one program that you're experienced in and
7 move to another program where you haven't been experienced in and you're
8 learning from your colleagues and your teammates as you go through these
9 things.

10 Those were the things that were most impactful to me that
11 have helped me, you know, make the best decisions I possibly can as a
12 member of this Commission.

13 So, my point here is, yes, training is important, both internal
14 and external, but think also about the experiential training that you get on the
15 job.

16 There's gold in there.

17 Like the things I -- I've got way too many stories to tell and
18 scars to show for it from what I've learned and very challenging experiences
19 at the NRC.

20 But you know what? Those are the things that help me
21 work through my job consistent with the NRC's values and the principles of
22 good regulation.

23 So, just give that some thought there.

24 MS. GLENN: Outstanding, so, thank you.

25 And with that, we are at 11:55.

26 I do want us to give everybody a round of applause. Thank

1 you for coming today with your questions from the region --

2 (APPLAUSE)

3 MS. GLENN: -- to everybody that was on Teams and in the
4 auditorium and those that submitted pre-submitted questions.

5 Before we go, I'm going to turn it over to the Chairman for
6 his closing remarks.

7 CHAIRMAN NIEH: Thank you very much.

8 I don't want to hold up your lunch, so I'll be very, very brief.

9 I watched this meeting last year as I was going through the
10 confirmation process.

11 This meeting today was a remarkable change in who we
12 were just one year ago, and that's because of the incredible work that all of
13 you are doing.

14 Each and every one of you in this room, in every single
15 region, and in Technical Training Center, you are all part of this moment.

16 I know all the new reactors and the new technologies, they
17 get the headlines, but please understand that everything you do is making this
18 moment possible.

19 America has trust in the NRC and in pursuing further
20 expansion of new technologies in this country because of the work you do.

21 So, thank you from the bottom of my heart.

22 I know my fellow colleagues on the Commission feel the
23 same way.

24 We know it's hard right now, it will get better, but you all are
25 delivering everything that America is asking for, and thank you.

26 Thank you so much for everything you do, we really

1 appreciate you.

2 Thank you and the meeting.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. GLENN: And with that, have a great afternoon.

5 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record

6 at 11:57 a.m.)