

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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29th ANNUAL REGULATORY INFORMATION CONFERENCE

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THE REMARKS OF COMMISSIONER STEPHEN G. BURNS

+ + + + +

WEDNESDAY,

MARCH 15, 2017

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ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

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The Regulatory Information Conference met in the Grand Ballroom at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel & Conference Center, 5701 Marinelli Road, Rockville, Maryland, at 8:00 a.m., Michael F. Weber, Director of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, facilitating.

PRESENT:

STEPHEN G. BURNS, Commissioner, Nuclear Regulatory
Commission

MICHAEL F. WEBER, Director, Office of Nuclear
Regulatory Research

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

1
2 DIRECTOR WEBER: Rounding out our
3 Commissioner plenary presentations, I now have the
4 honor to introduce Commissioner Stephen G. Burns, who
5 began his service on the Commission November 5th, 2014,
6 with a term ending June 30, 2019. Mr. Burns served as
7 the 16th Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission
8 from January 1st, 2015 through January 23rd of this
9 year.

10 Now serving as a Commissioner, he continues
11 to be engaged in the work of the agency, and in its
12 safety and security mission. Commissioner Burns had a
13 distinguished career in nuclear safety, both at the NRC
14 and internationally. This may be his 27th regulatory
15 information conference but --

16 (Off mic comment.)

17 DIRECTOR WEBER: But he missed three while
18 he was in France he mentioned, although it is his third
19 as a Commissioner of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.
20 Immediately prior to rejoining the NRC, Commissioner
21 Burns was the head of Legal Affairs at the Nuclear Energy
22 Agency of the organization for Economic Cooperation and
23 Development in Paris, from 2012 to 2014, and prior to
24 serving at NEA, Commissioner Burns served as a career
25 employee at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for 33

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1 years, from 1978 until 2012.

2 In this capacity, Commissioner Burns
3 served in a variety of challenging roles, including
4 serving as NRC's general counsel from May 2009 to April
5 2012, as the deputy general counsel before that,
6 beginning in 1998, and also of note Commissioner Burns
7 served as the executive assistant to former NRC Chairman
8 Ken Carr and served as the first director of the Office
9 of Commission Appellate Adjudication.

10 He received the NRC's Distinguished
11 Service Award in 2001 and the Presidential Meritorious
12 Executive Rank Award both in 1998 and 2008.
13 Commissioner Burns received his juris doctorate degree
14 with honors in 1978 from the George Washington
15 University here in Washington, D.C., and his Bachelor
16 of Arts degree magna cum laude in 1975 from Colgate
17 University in Hamilton, New York. Ladies and
18 gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Commissioner
19 Steven Burns.

20 (Applause.)

21 COMMISSIONER BURNS: So I'm not going to
22 talk about Colgate basketball, but I'm only interested
23 in hockey anyway, and so anyway. So you guys can all
24 worry about those things. Thanks for the introduction,
25 Mike. Actually Mike and I worked together on Chairman

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1 Carr's staff some time ago, and that was a great honor
2 for both of us and a great learning experience for us
3 as well.

4 First, a couple of just acknowledgments of
5 staff, and I could probably say ditto to a lot of the
6 comments that have already been made, and actually I
7 kind of like this going last. So I anticipate some of
8 the questions and I'll say what she said or what he said
9 or something like that at the end.

10 But I do want to first offer my
11 congratulations to Christine Svinicki for her
12 designation as Chairman in January. I worked with her.
13 I talked about my career and she talked about hers here
14 at the NRC, while I was in -- or in different capacities
15 over a number of years, and I've always appreciated her
16 quick wit, her sharp mind and her strategic viewpoint.

17 We've had a good transition. It's under --
18 sometimes a little challenging circumstance in January
19 but I think it's worked well, and I've asked my former
20 Chairman staff to give her and her staff support as we
21 do the transition. I think that's gone very well, and
22 I think that's one of the great things I think about the
23 agency, where we're able to do that.

24 I also want to take my -- this opportunity
25 to express my appreciation to senior management who

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1 supported me so well during my two years as chairman is,
2 you know, at the point I was being lured back to the NRC
3 from Paris, you can't believe I did that still, right?

4 But you know, I really never expected to
5 step into the role of chairman. But the staff, many of
6 whom when we were -- well, I was going to say had a lot
7 more hair on our heads, but looking down at a couple of
8 my colleagues, at least mine was a little darker at the
9 time. But some of these guys like Bill and like Vic,
10 Glenn Tracy and others, I worked with as we were sort
11 of growing up at the NRC and across the career and
12 learning things and applying that.

13 I appreciate their service and those of all
14 the senior management and their support, particularly
15 during the time as chairman. Because basically, you
16 know, even though in the chairman capacity you really
17 have to rely not only on your colleagues, on the
18 Commission to support, you know, support you where our
19 viewpoints align, and so when we reach consensus and
20 decisions to go forward.

21 But particularly on the staff, senior
22 management and line staff as we carry out our safety and
23 security programs. So again, I appreciate that. I
24 also wanted to acknowledge my personal staff. As the
25 audience may not be aware, the Chairman's Office, and

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1 this really goes back to the time of Chairman Zech. It
2 was structured to be a larger office than individual
3 Commissioners' offices.

4 When I took on the extra responsibility to
5 be the chairman, I decided not to fully staff up, you
6 know. We had a few more than the Commissioners' office,
7 but I really wanted -- I wanted to sort of grow into the
8 role and see what we really needed, and the folks I had
9 there, I was really impressed with and really stepped
10 up to the bar.

11 I want to acknowledge a few who have not
12 come with me, back up to the 18th floor and some of them
13 -- first, Clare Kasputys who's continuing on in Chairman
14 Svinicki's office. Clare is one of almost what I
15 would call these national assets because of her
16 understanding and knowledge of the budget and
17 administrative processes with the NRC. So I want to
18 thank her.

19 I want to thank Holly Harrington who was in
20 Office of Public Affairs, but did part-time duty helping
21 me with speech writing, and the speed and skill with
22 which she did that was very impressive. Lastly, Johari
23 Moore, who was my technical assistant for materials.
24 She really has one of the sharpest minds we had in the
25 office and her advice on an array of issues was very

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1 valued, and I loved her very dry and droll sense of humor
2 and sharp wit. It was a good compliment.

3 In the Burns family, humor is important,
4 you know. Going back to I know my grandfather, but I
5 was going to tell a pun, but he would say probably I'd
6 say two-thirds of a pun, P-U, okay. All right. So
7 that's my joke for the day. Anyway, but Johari's
8 transiting on in NSIR, expanding her career, and I hope
9 she has a long career with this agency, because I think
10 she's going there.

11 And then of course I want to acknowledge the
12 staff that did come back up with me to the 18th floor.
13 Steve Baggett, who's also served the Commission in other
14 capacities; Nan Valliere as well. Tracy Stokes, who
15 came to me from the Office of General Counsel.

16 My administrative assistant is Kathleen
17 Blake and Sandy Cianci. I really appreciate to
18 continue to work with them, and of course Jason Zorn,
19 who I had hired into the NRC through the Honors Program
20 in the Office of General Counsel.

21 He had wandered outside the agency and I
22 drew him back from Pittsburgh to work with me, and he's
23 been a great support and great help to me. So I wanted
24 to start out with those thanks, and how are we doing on
25 time. Okay. But when I reflected on what to talk about

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1 today, actually sort of I don't know whether this is one
2 of these sort of old man moments or what, but if I go
3 back 40 years, 40 years ago I applied for a job at the
4 NRC.

5 Not this time of year; I think it was
6 probably closer to the September time frame. But at the
7 same time, I did reflect on what I was doing four years
8 ago. So I was in law school and I was on the George
9 Washington Law Review and I wrote an article for the law
10 review on Congress and the Office of Technology
11 Assessment.

12 How many of you remember OTA? Yeah, okay.
13 There are a few of us there. It was abolished after,
14 in the 1990's or the early 2000's. I can't remember
15 quite when, but the idea, when I go back and read my old
16 note, and I'll tell you why I'm mentioning my old note
17 in a minute, is you know, this notion of trying to get
18 better.

19 It was an effort in looking at getting
20 better at science and technology, and how it's
21 incorporated in the public policy process. One can
22 argue about the merits of OTA or not. But that sort of
23 realizes is I've been sort of at this even at law school,
24 and this was not -- I was a German major, you know. If
25 you want me, I can recite a poem for you later if you'd

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1 like from memory, a Goethe poem, a beautiful poem.

2 But you know, this is not something I really
3 thought I would get into. But I realize now I've been
4 sort of at it about 40 years. Now why did I mention my
5 note? Well when I went back to look at it on Hine
6 Online, which is one of these electronic research
7 services, it said I was something like the 50,467th most
8 read person in the Hines Online.

9 So what I'm trying to do is have you guys
10 kind of look it up so I get down to about 49,000 or
11 something like that today. But in any event, one of the
12 things I realized, and I think even coming back to the
13 agency, certainly my time at NEA, but also in the General
14 Counsel's office and working with the technical staff,
15 working with the legal staff is this thinking about what
16 I talked about last year called the regulatory craft.

17 I'm not going to repeat the speech I gave
18 last year, but maybe I can build upon it in some small
19 way. We talked a lot this morning, and I think
20 appropriately so, sort at the pivot point we may be at
21 as an agency, having gone through the Project Aim
22 process, which again and I, you know, I compliment those
23 both on the staff and Chairman MacFarlane and the other
24 Commissioners for encouraging that process in 2014,
25 particularly as a way of -- for us to take our own destiny

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1 in our hands, to the extent that we can.

2 You know, still with, you know, the
3 oversight of the Congress, the discipline you have
4 through the budgetary process, through the executive
5 branch. But something that says we -- let us think
6 about what makes sense going forward, and we've gone a
7 far way with that.

8 But one of the -- you know, when we come
9 through Aim and we're particular projects and now what
10 we talk about is a sustainability and how we move on from
11 it, which means, you know, we've gotten through the
12 things like redesigns, and some processes. We've I
13 think recentered some processes. Vic talked about
14 backfitting, for example.

15 We've done those types of things. We've
16 cut back on things like perhaps the excessive use of
17 toner cartridges and things like that. Those things
18 can, as we all know, those things can, you know. Yeah.
19 You need to be in that business in terms of, right. So
20 you can cut those kinds of costs.

21 But I think there's still something to be
22 said about what we need to do is continually focus on
23 what it means to be a regulator, and as I say I've talked
24 about the regulatory craft in some past speeches. But
25 ultimately it's about how our people sort of understand

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1 and work through the regulatory process. I think
2 that's the essence, and I think that's a lot of what I
3 think we're focused on as an agency.

4 I think that's what you heard, particularly
5 Vic and a number of details that Vic was talking about,
6 in terms of where we need to focus. So and it's not an
7 easy task. We don't walk into this building or the
8 buildings across the street becoming sort of effective
9 regulators.

10 You know, we come out of different
11 disciplines. I came out of law school. We have people
12 coming out of the Nuclear Navy, out of engineering
13 schools, maybe have had some industry or other types of
14 experience coming in, and you just don't sit them down
15 and say do it.

16 I actually had an attorney once, and I
17 realize in the interest of a good work environment, he
18 says I'm using this as a metaphor. I could have smacked
19 him upside the head because what he did, he had a --
20 there's a young attorney who came to work for me. She
21 had been my summer clerk. She comes into the office her
22 first week or second week. He dumped something on the
23 desk and said oh here, give me this by the end of the
24 day.

25 Now nobody really knew it. I found out

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1 about this and was absolutely appalled, because though
2 she had been at the NRC before, she really wasn't into
3 the, if you will, into the system yet. Really having
4 that understanding of what's your role. You come out
5 of law school, well we're going to do some law. Or we
6 know we're going to sit here and talk about what the law
7 is.

8 But then you have to realize you've got to
9 interact with that client, that client who may be that
10 technical expert. He might be that office director.
11 He might be that peer that's the project manager. It
12 might be you're going to a meeting with somebody from,
13 you know, with people from the outside, where you have
14 NGOs, where you have licensees who are all engaged.

15 So it's not just a matter of showing up and
16 you're here and you've got to do the work. You've got
17 to be, you know, you've got to be inculcated in terms
18 of what the dynamic is, what it is about our job and how
19 we do it and how we can do it well.

20 So before I go on about what that is, what
21 I think we can focus on, one of the things I think for
22 us as we come into the agency, and here I'm going to
23 perhaps drift from sort of the technical realm that the
24 agency primarily works in, but we have to understand the
25 context, and maybe that's this intersection of law and

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1 technology.

2 I know Chairman Diaz used to talk about that
3 a lot, and I think there's a lot to that. So it's this
4 integration, if you will, of the science, of the
5 engineering, but also the framework that's the
6 institutional, the legal framework that we work in, and
7 having us understand that and having new folks here at
8 the NRC and actually a continual reminder for those of
9 us who have been around and continue to work in the area.
10 I think it's very important.

11 And as we know, within our framework, the
12 hallmark is the Atomic Energy Act of 1954. While we
13 have interesting debates about what it means,
14 ultimately we come down to that concept, that very in
15 effect simple or deceptively simple phrase "adequate
16 protection" and what it means in a particular context
17 in a particular regulation, and the particular
18 environment that we regulate in.

19 And of course seeking that, we're going to
20 have healthy debates. We're going to have folks, at one
21 level you're concerned about whether you've gone too
22 far, whether you've not gone far enough. Those are the
23 debates that we have. That's the interesting thing,
24 and all -- what common sense, I think, dictates an
25 understanding in the context of what we have under the

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1 Atomic Energy Act, is there is no such thing really as
2 zero risk.

3 And that's not what we should attend to as
4 regulators or attempt to make as an unattainable goal.
5 We have to get the mentality infused in those we work
6 with, to ensure that we make that understood in terms
7 of those we regulate and those we are obligated to
8 regulate for, to protect, the American public.

9 So what I might turn to is perhaps a little
10 bit of law. I hesitate to call it nuclear law, and one
11 thing I would say is if you beg my indulgence, is perhaps
12 a starting point for this, even for us here at the
13 Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and I would say of course
14 because we are a federal agency, are the starting points
15 of the U.S. Constitution.

16 So why am I talking about the Constitution?
17 What does that have to do with the regulation of nuclear
18 safety. I think at a lot as it turns out. To quote
19 James Madison, who's not a nuclear engineer, but James
20 Madison writes in Federalist No. 51, that great
21 collection of documents that talk about our
22 Constitution, Madison writes "In framing a government
23 which is to be administered by men over men," let's say
24 people over people, "the great difficulty lies in this:
25 You must first enable the government to control the

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1 government, and in the next place oblige it to control
2 itself."

3 That's that interesting dynamic. I think
4 Madison and others who, as they wrote about in the
5 defense or in the advocacy for the Constitution. His
6 statement outlines in broad terms what the Supreme Court
7 later has articulated as the limited powers of the
8 federal government on the Constitution.

9 The Court described this construct as "The
10 federal government is acknowledged by all to be one of
11 the numerated powers. That is, rather than granting
12 general authority to perform all the conceivable
13 functions of government, the Constitution lists or
14 enumerates the federal government's powers." It's the
15 Constitution's express conferral of powers, some
16 powers, make it clear that it does not grant others, and
17 the federal government can only exercise the powers
18 granted to it.

19 So if we look at that construct a slightly
20 different way, a basic premise of our entire system of
21 government is that citizens or associations of citizens
22 or organizations that they form get the benefit of the
23 doubt when it comes to government action. Such a notion
24 is reflected, for example, in the backfit pool I would
25 argue, which prescribes that the agency must undertake

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1 an analytical process and justify its position before
2 imposing new requirements on the regulated.

3 It's also reflected in the legal structure
4 of our country and our government, which under the
5 Administrative Procedure Act prescribes specific
6 standards for agencies of government to apply before
7 imposing new burdens on society. Now sometimes this
8 framework can seem like an onerous impediment to agency
9 action.

10 However, truth be told it is intended to be
11 an impediment and sometimes difficult by design. So as
12 individual citizens, we recognize the value of this
13 impediment when it comes to things like our rights under
14 the Fifth Amendment not to have property seized by the
15 government arbitrarily, or the limits on the taxation
16 authority of the IRS, of the right not to be detained
17 by police without cause.

18 It may be harder to take these limits in
19 mind sometimes when it comes more civil authorities, and
20 from the perspective of government regulation in an
21 area. But it's necessary I think to remind ourselves
22 of it from time to time. So that leads us to authorities
23 of the NRC. The Supreme Court has explained time and
24 time again that a regulatory agency operates solely
25 within the authorities given to it by the Congress.

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1 For the NRC, that is primarily the Atomic
2 Energy Act and a few other things along the way, the
3 Energy Reorganization Act and some others. While our
4 authority under the statute is broad and permits a
5 significant exercise of discretion by the agency, it's
6 not unbounded.

7 As I alluded to earlier, I think the
8 starting point of all this inquiry is our mandate that
9 the NRC provide reasonable assurance of adequate
10 protection. It's not an absolutely assurance again or
11 100 percent expectation of absence of risk. So why is
12 that important when it comes to understanding how to be
13 a regulator?

14 Well, I think every decision that we make
15 must be viewed through this lens, and an essential
16 function of the NRC is to determine how much risk is
17 acceptable and when establishing regulatory
18 requirements. When it drafted the Atomic Energy Act,
19 the Congress was trying to establish a balance between
20 establishing a strong regulatory framework for an
21 emerging industry using novel technology, while at the
22 same time not stifling its development.

23 Worlds evolve, and the promotional and
24 regulatory organizations within the Atomic Energy
25 Commission that were established at the time were broken

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1 apart for good reason. But it's important to remind
2 ourselves that peaceable uses of atomic energy for "the
3 maximum contribution to the general welfare" continues
4 to be the policy expressed in the Atomic Energy Act.

5 So let's back up to what it means to become
6 a regulator. Within those general principles I've
7 said, I think there are probably three things we need
8 to focus on in the agency. I think we are, and I think
9 those are areas where I think we need to continue to
10 focus. One is training and development. I mentioned
11 my young colleague who started out and basically
12 throwing, you know, rewrite the Atomic Energy Act on the
13 first day of work, something like that.

14 So that's training and oversight. I think
15 it's management oversight, management leadership and
16 stakeholder engagement. Let me briefly address each of
17 those. So as I said, our staff often come from
18 different pipelines, Nuclear Navy, industry,
19 university, law schools, other schools. They came into
20 our doors knowing the principles of engineering and
21 science and law, but we don't necessarily know how to
22 be a regulator.

23 So part of our task here as, you know,
24 senior officials in the agency, as managers, as
25 experienced staff is to help that process along. Some

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1 of it is done, I think, by training. You know, what you
2 go through, how it affected, if you will, the tribal
3 lore, the culture is transmitted. Some of it is by
4 example. It's by the example of us as Commissioners,
5 of senior management. It is of peers. It is the
6 ability to engage with each other as in peers. It is
7 those sort of support groups within your cohort.

8 It is, and this is one of the things I've
9 always thought has been a strength of NRC, it is this
10 willingness to look across disciplines. You know, we
11 get a lot of -- over the years, I probably -- if I had
12 collected all the lawyers jokes and my engineer jokes,
13 I'd probably have -- well I could probably publish a
14 book.

15 But part of that comes out of the
16 camaraderie that we develop, and knowing that we are
17 part of a mutual support system. That's what's
18 important and that's what's important for us to continue
19 to engage with in this agency. Vic touched on it in
20 terms of some of the things I think the staff wants to
21 try to do.

22 You know, we recognize in terms of sort of
23 the feedback or the temperature-taking we get from some
24 of the surveys, that helps us go on and helps us become
25 a tighter knit organization, to address those issues

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1 where some people may not feel that they have that
2 capacity or that engagement or acceptability to raise
3 issues at all. That's something we have to keep working
4 at.

5 And we have to -- it is within that sense
6 is by -- again by example, and by coaching and all, is
7 this finding that -- and it is, we've had a lot of grail
8 quests here today, and I've used in other speeches, you
9 know. I'm like Percival on the grail quest. But it is,
10 I think, a quest of trying to find either that sweet spot
11 in developing how do we look at that.

12 We engage, we raise the issues.
13 Ultimately, we have to resolve the issues. But that's
14 what we need to inculcate into our staff. So that's
15 part of our training and it is again, as I say, it's
16 formal and informal. Management oversight, it says
17 without saying, we have to, as senior leadership, the
18 Commission, the senior leadership, the offices, we have
19 -- and down to the first line supervisors, who in many
20 ways I think have the most difficult task.

21 We have to keep inculcating that culture
22 that looks at how do we find the optimal solutions. How
23 do we assure that we tease out what's important from what
24 just may be a distraction in terms of safety issues?
25 You know, NRC is often and I sort of cringe sometimes

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1 when we're talked about as the gold standard.

2 But what I think the NRC needs to do is
3 always seek to achieve highest standards of
4 performance, but do so with the balanced perspective on
5 the significance of activities and the overall context
6 of our regulatory responsibility, and the overarching
7 objective to be focused on the right things.

8 You know what? That is a journey. That is
9 an ongoing quest. Management can reinforce those
10 principles through day-to-day oversight, engagements
11 with the staff and agency operations, engagement with
12 those who have an interest with what we do outside the
13 agency, whether it's licensees, whether it's
14 governmental officials, whether it's members of the
15 public, NGOs, the press, the media.

16 We have to do it not just by proclamation,
17 but by practice and have to implement it that way, and
18 that's where management I think has the burden.
19 Finally, what I would say, and I mention this again it
20 is, this is not solely an internal reflection or
21 journey. It is a quest on which we engage with others
22 along the road, and if you read any of those old stories,
23 and I had -- as a German major, I actually had to read
24 some of the old things.

25 So those knights who went out didn't just

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1 talk to themselves. They met interesting people.
2 Sometimes you weren't quite sure who they were on the
3 way and they turned out to be magicians and kings and
4 pretty women sometimes, for some of these knights, along
5 the way.

6 But what that says is it really is about
7 engagement. It's about engagement with the industry.
8 It's engagement with folks in the NGO community, with
9 the general public that lives near the plants, with the
10 press, with the Congress, with state officials, with
11 local officials. That's again something we have to
12 work at, I think at all the time. And that, what that
13 emphasizes to me is what I've said across the years.
14 That means basically we are independent, but we are not
15 isolated. That for me is the greatest thing or
16 objective I think we can achieve there.

17 So I've tried to scratch the surface here
18 in the meanderings of these thoughts is, you know, I
19 quote Mark Twain if I had more time, I would have written
20 a shorter speech or to paraphrase Mark Twain. But so
21 I come back again. So I think we have to recognize NRC
22 can't operate in a vacuum and it shouldn't do so.

23 That's not only bad practice, but it's
24 inconsistent with the law, which requires us to engage
25 through rulemaking notices. We have a public hearing

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1 process. We go beyond that in terms of trying to do
2 engagement, and I know some of my international
3 colleagues. I'm actually very -- I remember studying,
4 for example, the changes in the French law and the
5 Transparency Act of 2006.

6 The idea there to inform in particular the
7 public information or the local information committees.
8 So there are different practices around the world I
9 think we can look at and learn from. So that's that
10 engagement.

11 Again, we can't assume just because folks
12 come in the door and we need that technical talent, that
13 we know how to be regulators when we come in, so we need
14 to work at that. And finally, I think I'll leave you
15 with it's hard. It's hard being the regulator. But I
16 don't ask for any sympathy for that being hard.

17 It's hard by design. It's because of the
18 framework we work in to, and sometimes it's harder than
19 others. I've heard some of these questions, and that
20 gets at I think the point I'm trying to make about
21 engagement and also thinking about what really makes
22 sense in terms of safety, of security and the viability
23 of the regulatory program.

24 So there are competing factors, tensions,
25 pressures to reach the right decision at the end of the

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1 day. You out there hold us to that standard, as well
2 you should. I think we owe it to you, we owe it to the
3 American people to judicially exercise our authority,
4 keeping safety, keeping security at the front and first
5 in line. Thank you.

6 (Applause.)

7 DIRECTOR WEBER: Thank you, Commissioner
8 Burns. We have time for a couple of quick questions.
9 So the first one is at a time when states like New York
10 and Illinois are being asked to help ensure the
11 competitiveness of nuclear power as a source of
12 generation, should more weight be given to broadly held
13 state interests under the Constitution, such as
14 eliminating SafeStore (phonetic) and requiring
15 immediate dismantlement for closed plants?

16 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Well, I think those
17 are decisions. This is often the interesting thing,
18 and I've come across in the last couple of years in terms
19 of some of my travels is some of those decisions are
20 really decisions of engagement outside the NRC's tent.
21 What that, I think that means is what we are -- have to
22 be focused on is focused on the technical aspects of what
23 we do and the safety aspect.

24 We have to be up-front about, you know,
25 up-front about that. This is what it means from out

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1 standpoint, based on the best information we know, is
2 to what the standard should be. Questions about, you
3 know, fuel storage, whether you support basically
4 efforts to help nuclear generation that might otherwise
5 shut down, timing of Safestore, a lot of those things
6 are engagements I think within either in the local, in
7 local areas or regionally or national things that really
8 are not primarily the NRC.

9 So I think what we have to do is keep, you
10 know, on task with respect to honest assessment of what
11 we think the technical risks are and move from there.

12 DIRECTOR WEBER: Okay, and the last
13 question, is there a simple way to open and update the
14 Atomic Energy Act to address some outdated aspects, such
15 as foreign ownership and operation, without opening up
16 the entire Act to review and mischief?

17 COMMISSIONER BURNS: No.

18 DIRECTOR WEBER: There you go.

19 COMMISSIONER BURNS: No. I might even say
20 hell no.

21 DIRECTOR WEBER: All right, Commissioner
22 Burns. Thank you very much.

23 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

25 DIRECTOR WEBER: This concludes our morning

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1 plenary and we are now on our break. Please join us
2 again no later than 10:55, so we can resume for our
3 special guest plenary session. Thank you very much.

4 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
5 off the record at 10:31 a.m.)

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