

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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30<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL REGULATORY INFORMATION CONFERENCE

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WELCOME, INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, AND REMARKS OF THE

HONORABLE KRISTINE L. SVINICKI, CHAIRMAN

+ + + + +

TUESDAY

MARCH 13, 2018

+ + + + +

The Regulatory Information Conference met in the Grand Ballroom at the Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, 5701 Marinelli Road, Rockville, Maryland, at 8:30 a.m., Brian Holian, Acting Director for NRR, facilitating.

PRESENT:

KRISTINE L. SVINICKI, Chairman, U.S. Nuclear  
Regulatory Commission

BRIAN HOLIAN, Acting Director, Office of Nuclear  
Reactor Regulations

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

2

3 MR. HOLIAN: Well good morning and welcome  
4 to the 30th anniversary of the NRC's Regulatory  
5 Information Conference. I am Brian Holian. I am the  
6 Acting Director of the Office of Nuclear Reactor  
7 Regulation, or NRR.

8 It's a great honor to be here today and to  
9 have this opportunity to welcome everyone on behalf of  
10 the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. NRR, along  
11 with the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research led by  
12 Michael Weber, co-sponsor this event.

13 We work in partnership with many NRC  
14 offices to bring you a conference that is both  
15 informative and we hope engaging. Speaking of  
16 engaging, on behalf of this assembly thank you to the  
17 Color Guard and NRC's own Kimberly Gaskins for your  
18 moving rendition of the National Anthem. Thank you.

19 (Applause)

20 MR. HOLIAN: The RIC is the largest annual  
21 meeting hosted by the NRC. This format provides an  
22 environment for open dialogue between the NRC and its  
23 many stakeholders on topics pertaining to nuclear

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1 regulatory activities and emergent issues that are of  
2 interest to both the domestic and our international  
3 nuclear communities.

4 This year we have over 2500 participants  
5 registered at the RIC and we have representatives from  
6 over 32 countries. I would like to recognize all of  
7 you who are taking the time to participate in the RIC  
8 as well as several distinguished attendees that I note  
9 are registered.

10 We have Former Chairmen Richard Meserve  
11 and Nils Diaz, Former Commissioners Jeff Merrifield and  
12 George Apostolakis. We thank these individuals for  
13 their prior service and their continued involvement in  
14 nuclear regulation.

15 We open the RIC with keynote remarks from  
16 the NRC's Chairman, Kristine Svinicki. That will be  
17 followed by NRC's Executive Director for Operations Vic  
18 McCree. After a break they are followed by remarks  
19 from Commissioners Jeff Baran and Stephen Burns.

20 Some of you may know that we made some  
21 program changes to the Wednesday morning program  
22 schedule. I wanted to highlight those. We had about  
23 a thousand people register when we changed around some  
24 of the technical sessions on Wednesday morning.

25 So there were sessions on cyber security,

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1 decommissioning, and risk-informed that we moved from  
2 their location. Your RIC program is correct, however,  
3 printed with their locations on Wednesday morning.

4 Also I will highlight, be looking for an  
5 insert to your RIC program. If you picked one up last  
6 night you might be missing an insert. The locations  
7 for those Wednesday morning sessions have changed, so  
8 if you have your program you should also have an insert  
9 that goes into the center for that.

10 Besides those three technical sessions we  
11 added a session this year by NRC's Historian, Mr. Tom  
12 Wellock. That session will be titled "Top Events in  
13 Regulatory History."

14 I have heard that presentation at an NRC  
15 meeting and it is well worth your time. That is in  
16 Salons A to C tomorrow morning.

17 You will note this year that our posters  
18 are in electronic format. We have 18 exhibits and so  
19 over the next 2-1/2 days I hope you partake and stop  
20 by and engage with the presenters that are by the  
21 electronic displays and discuss with them their areas  
22 of relevant expertise.

23 We have two lunchtime workshops. We have  
24 one today at 12:15 on identify theft in the White Flint  
25 Amphitheater and we have one tomorrow on how the ADAMS

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1 system works, the Agency's document repository system.  
2 So that's tomorrow and those are in your program with  
3 the locations.

4 A tradition for the RIC are the tours that  
5 we hold of the NRC Operation's Center. We have six of  
6 those this year. We added the sixth one Wednesday  
7 morning, so we added a new session Wednesday morning.

8 You don't have to sign up for the Wednesday  
9 morning one. We pre-registered for the other five  
10 sessions. I heard that Session 3 the tour of the RIC  
11 is full, so -- or even overfilled.

12 We are not like an airline, we don't offer  
13 vouchers, but we do ask any volunteers from the third  
14 session if you want you could move to the sixth session  
15 Wednesday morning.

16 What's new at the RIC? A couple things are  
17 new. One, a couple of us looked around at the backdrop  
18 this year and I want to dispel the rumor, these are not  
19 mockups of accident tolerant fuel behind me here, okay.

20 (Laughter)

21 MR. HOLIAN: They are shiny and they are  
22 new, but that was yesterday's rumor going around. So  
23 that's one item.

24 What else is new at the RIC? We have a  
25 different feedback mechanism. Some of you are

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1 familiar with writing out feedback, this year you can  
2 actually text in your feedback. So I think we have a  
3 slide, this is on Page 19 of your program also.

4 I personally think this is a great addition  
5 to the RIC. This will be my excuse when my boss sees  
6 me on my phone, I'll just say, well, I'm just texting  
7 in RIC feedback, that's all, not checking the March  
8 Madness upcoming selections.

9 Give it a try, let us know how that goes.  
10 We will have the written feedback forms also in the back  
11 of each of the rooms and a box for written feedback forms  
12 if you would prefer that.

13 Back by popular demand, I hope you have  
14 been enjoying some of the RIC facts and pictures that  
15 we have that will oscillate on the screens in between  
16 sessions and at breaks.

17 You know, I tried to get a couple of my  
18 pictures into the facts and the factoids and they were  
19 rejected, so since I knew I was leading off today I  
20 thought, well, I'll get around that, so I am going to  
21 show you a couple of the pictures that were rejected  
22 from the session.

23 I always start my all-hands meetings with  
24 pictures. So here is the first picture, this is the  
25 30th anniversary of the RIC, this is back around RIC

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1 Number 3 or 4, that's a young inspector.

2 As I said it's about circa 19, maybe '92.  
3 That is the containment wall you are looking at, so that  
4 is one of our defense-in-depths, the containment wall.

5 I will note on a break if you know what that  
6 plant is come up and you'll get a free cookie from the  
7 RIC from me if you can name that plant. I did see Dave  
8 Lochbaum here this morning.

9 Those are not gaps in the concrete I want  
10 you to know. That's a pre-stressed containment and  
11 they took the tendons out when the cut through for the  
12 steam generator replacement at that plant.

13 Picture Number 2 that I have was also  
14 rejected. Vic, I'm sorry to say this one was rejected  
15 also. I titled this "Young Regulators at Work through  
16 Lunch" and this is 1997.

17 You will be hearing from that young,  
18 dashing regulator in the middle left there in a short  
19 while. That is our EDO Vic McCree. You know, I wanted  
20 to highlight a couple other individuals in this  
21 picture.

22 These were a bunch of technical  
23 assistants, executive directors, in about the 1997  
24 timeframe, so we're over 20 years ago. The second from  
25 the right is a gentlemen named Jim Johnson.

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1           You will hear a lot at the RIC about change,  
2           some innovative change, some transformational change.  
3           A couple individuals in this picture, quite a few of  
4           them, were behind change at the NRC 20 years ago.

5           Jim Johnson was one of the prime  
6           contributors to the policy statement on risk that was  
7           put out at about that time. The second from the left  
8           is an old buddy of mine who is a good inspector and a  
9           regulator down in Region II, Mark Miller.

10           Mark was sitting here at this lunchtime and  
11           he was pondering what the ROP would look like. That's  
12           true. It was about 20 years ago and he passed on some  
13           ideas from the Chairman's Office to Mike Johnson and  
14           others in NRR.

15           Well, enough reminiscing from my pictures.  
16           One other thing new this year is we will be doing, or  
17           once again maybe not new, but maybe we'll increase the  
18           amount of live tweeting, so there will be sessions  
19           coming up from live tweets from various sessions, look  
20           for that.

21           Now onto general information. Safety and  
22           security are of prime importance to the NRC so we do  
23           ask that you display your badge at all times and please  
24           follow the following safety measures.

25           Once rooms are filled to capacity

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1 participants will be directed to other sessions. If  
2 you see something say something. Report any  
3 suspicious activity to security members that are around  
4 the RIC.

5 The fire exits are properly marked in the  
6 back and sides of each room and we do have two automatic  
7 external defibrillators, say that twice, located near  
8 the main lobby of the hotel room.

9 You may have noticed that Montgomery  
10 County has completed a new parking garage over at the  
11 Executive Boulevard side of the conference room. No  
12 licensee fees were used for that parking garage I will  
13 have you know. That's a CFO joke, okay.

14 (Laughter)

15 MR. HOLIAN: RIC attendees, I am just  
16 reminded that you need to get a chaser ticket at the  
17 registration service desk to save you on a reduced daily  
18 rate if you are a RIC member.

19 Now just to pass on some thanks. To plan  
20 and execute a conference of this size and magnitude  
21 requires the hard work and dedication of many. There  
22 are many I won't name, but for the NRC I would like to  
23 recognize a continuing prime person who starts the day  
24 after the RIC and continues, a couple people, Lorna  
25 Kipfer and Brenett Warren, the Planning Committee for

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1 their day-to-day efforts, Greg Bowman and Tom Boyce,  
2 two Branch Chiefs, one from Research, one from NRR, and  
3 their Technical Review Committee.

4 They work to make sure that the technical  
5 sessions are appropriate and they oversee the entire  
6 program content.

7 To all the session chairs, coordinators,  
8 the e-poster presenters, we thank you for your time with  
9 the displays, the volunteers from across the Agency for  
10 their contribution as room monitors, registration  
11 assistants, various other roles, and, finally, the  
12 support from many NRC offices, especially the Office  
13 of the Admin and the Office of the Chief Information  
14 Officer for their support in the live web streaming of  
15 these sessions, photographic, and graphic. Thank you  
16 to all these folks. Please.

17 (Applause)

18 MR. HOLIAN: I'd like to reiterate the  
19 value of this conference. It is in both the formal  
20 presentations and it is the opportunity for informal  
21 discussions and networking.

22 Each year I notice robust discussions  
23 after the sessions and in the hallways. I also notice  
24 some of this in the restaurant and the bar down the  
25 hallway, so I do note that.

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1 I urge all of us, whether we are  
2 regulators, licensees, international, the public, no  
3 matter what sessions or what location, to take the time  
4 at this conference to listen carefully, ask questions,  
5 and come away better informed with progress having  
6 being made.

7 Now it is a great pleasure that I welcome  
8 our keynote speaker, Chairman Svinicki to the stage.

9 (Applause)

10 MR. HOLIAN: The Honorable Kristine  
11 Svinicki was designated Chairman of the U.S. Nuclear  
12 Regulatory Commission by President Donald Trump on  
13 January 23, 2017.

14 Last year she was sworn in for her third  
15 term as a Commissioner for a term ending on June 30,  
16 2022. She began her service on the Commission in 2008.

17 Chairman Svinicki has enjoyed a  
18 distinguished career as a nuclear engineer at the U.S.  
19 Department of Energy and as a policy advisory in the  
20 U.S. Senate advancing policies and initiatives  
21 regarding national security, science, technology,  
22 energy, and the environment.

23 She has served on a number of expert  
24 advisory panels and has twice received the Presidential  
25 Citation of the American Nuclear Society for her

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1 contributions to U.S. Nuclear Policy.

2 Chairman Svinicki is a graduate of the  
3 University of Michigan. Please join me in welcoming  
4 to the podium our Chairman, Kristine Svinicki.

5 (Applause)

6 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Good morning,  
7 everyone.

8 Thank you, Brian, for that introduction.  
9 How is everybody feeling this morning? Feeling good?

10 This is really a large group of people. I  
11 am very pleased to take part in this year's Regulatory  
12 Information Conference and I extend my thanks to each  
13 of you for attending this session and also to those of  
14 you tuning in to the webcast, and there are a number  
15 of people who have said to me they are going to be tuning  
16 in to the webcast, so I know you're out there.

17 I want to add my personal thanks and on  
18 behalf of the Commission to all of the many NRC  
19 employees who make this conference possible, as Brian  
20 was noting.

21 As I note each year this is a tremendous  
22 undertaking and it is fueled by the hard work of our  
23 many NRC staff and the RIC volunteers who actually are  
24 here during the implementation of the conference and  
25 make everything run smoothly.

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1           Their hard work and dedication are a chief  
2 contributor to what makes this conference a success on  
3 the part of the U.S. NRC.

4           I would also like to acknowledge the  
5 presence of our important partners from both other  
6 federal agencies and state agencies within the United  
7 States as well as the many international colleagues who  
8 are joining us this week.

9           The NRC's critical relationships with  
10 other governmental entities and collaboration on  
11 lessons learned with international counterparts  
12 facilitate the effective achievement of our mission.

13           Thank you for taking the time to be here  
14 and in some cases for agreeing to being a presenter at  
15 one of the technical sessions this week.

16           Finally, I would like to acknowledge my  
17 Commission colleagues, Commissioner Baran and  
18 Commissioner Burns. They are both fine individuals  
19 and good colleagues and I am very, very grateful for  
20 that.

21           Where we agree, we agree, where we  
22 disagree, we disagree, and we move past it quickly, and  
23 you don't have to agree on everything with someone in  
24 order to like them and enjoy working with them.

25           Now most of us in this room know that to

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1 be true. Outside these doors, well, I'm not sure I can  
2 always vouch for that, but I really thank my Commission  
3 colleagues for the productivity of our working  
4 relationship, so, thank you, both, and I look forward  
5 to your remarks later in the morning.

6 So a big milestone is coming up for me later  
7 this month. I will hit the big 1-0. I will complete  
8 a decade's worth of service on this Commission and that  
9 makes this my tenth RIC speech.

10 So last week I was meeting with our EDO  
11 Victor McCree and I said in case you are wondering,  
12 Victor, when it is that the well on RIC speeches and  
13 creativity runs dry the answer is the number ten, but  
14 at the end of the day all of you will be the judge of  
15 that, not me.

16 And as Brian has mentioned the remarks of  
17 our Executive Director of Operations Vic McCree will  
18 follow mine with a presentation of various agency  
19 initiatives, and I am going to leave that broad terrain  
20 for him to cover as our Executive Director.

21 As it has been mentioned there are  
22 individuals who are or will be circulating in the aisles  
23 to collect your written questions. So if you pass your  
24 question cards down to them they will bring them up the  
25 row to be collected and brought to Brian so he can be

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1 prepared to ask me the questions at the appropriate  
2 time.

3 But we can't break a 10-year record, I  
4 decided maybe year 11 is an opportunity for reset, but  
5 I am worried that some ill fortune would befall me if  
6 I didn't begin by telling a bad joke.

7 So, okay, is everybody ready to groan? In  
8 unison is best, it's the most, there is maximum effect  
9 if you all groan in unison. So this is the joke, I'd  
10 tell you a chemistry joke but I'm not sure I'd get a  
11 reaction.

12 (Laughter)

13 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: There you go. Okay,  
14 that's the joke. See, I didn't want you to miss the  
15 joke because it's a joke about telling a joke. So it's  
16 kind of like the Mobius strip of jokes, if you know what  
17 that is, it turns back in on itself. Perhaps you will  
18 laugh later when you circle back around to it.

19 (Laughter)

20 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: So since I last  
21 addressed this conference the NRC has continued to  
22 challenge itself to deliver our safety and security  
23 mission in an effective, efficient, and agile manner.

24 Our public outreach to and engagement with  
25 those we regulate, public policymakers, and the broader

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1 range of interested stakeholder, continues to provide  
2 valuable insights to inform and shape many ongoing NRC  
3 program changes and enhancements.

4 These insights are continually factored  
5 into the Agency's work. That said, at its heart our  
6 central safety and security mission remains unchanged  
7 even as our methods and means to accomplish it may  
8 evolve.

9 At this year's RIC you will have the  
10 opportunity to hear from NRC staff and a diverse set  
11 of external presenters as they provide information and  
12 engage in dialogue with each other on panel sessions  
13 about a range of topics.

14 One of the breakout sessions this  
15 afternoon has generated significant early interests  
16 from attendees, in fact, I think it might already be  
17 oversubscribed, and that is the technical session that  
18 begins at 1:30 entitled "Transformation at the NRC."

19 In his remarks following mine Vic McCree  
20 will discuss at a high level the NRC's transformation  
21 initiative that he has charted and that is currently  
22 underway. I am going to leave that topic for him to  
23 discuss.

24 Instead, I decided to highlight an  
25 initiative that perhaps isn't as visible outside of the

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1 NRC, and that is the NRC's innovation forum.

2 In assessing the results of employee  
3 viewpoint surveys of recent years on the statement "my  
4 organization values innovation" the NRC staff thought  
5 that the low to moderate level of employee agreement  
6 with that statement presented an opportunity to bring  
7 greater focus, structure, and Agency-wide attention to  
8 capturing the many employee innovations and  
9 suggestions that probably were out there but they  
10 weren't necessarily finding a home.

11 Although a handful of NRC offices had  
12 something along these lines, such as Region II's Idea  
13 Greenhouse, the communications Agency-wide were  
14 piecemeal and not all employees had access to the same  
15 opportunity.

16 Not being content with this as the status  
17 quo and with the support from the EDO and other agency  
18 executives a diverse cross section of employees from  
19 across NRC's programs, regions, subject matter  
20 disciplines, and levels of experience came together to  
21 create the NRC Innovation Forum.

22 They are bringing tremendous energy to the  
23 cause of innovation and are off to a promising start.  
24 Unlike transformation, ideas submitted to the  
25 Innovation Forum need not be grammed. I confess to

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1 occasionally hopping on the NRC internal sharepoint  
2 webpage for the forum and browsing the log of recent  
3 suggestions.

4 I discovered, for instance, that moving to  
5 electronic concurrence on documents continues to be a  
6 very popular cause here at NRC. I was wondering if  
7 there are any members of the innovation forum here today  
8 I would ask you to raise your hands, but if you are not  
9 in the room I still want to thank you for establishing  
10 this forum and for your dedication and your infectious  
11 energy to harnessing all the creativity that we as NRC  
12 employees know exist in our organization.

13 More broadly the NRC continues to endeavor  
14 to forecast our work with greater accuracy and identify  
15 changes to our resource needs in the current very  
16 dynamic nuclear environment.

17 The Agency is pursuing activities such as  
18 standardizing and centralizing support staff's  
19 functions for both headquarters and regional offices  
20 and establishing a common prioritization process to  
21 prepare the Agency to evaluate emerging work more  
22 readily and to staff it more efficiently.

23 We are also implementing an enhanced  
24 strategic workforce planning process to improve the  
25 training, agility, and utilization of our capable

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1 workforce.

2 In or programmatic work the NRC continues  
3 its pursuit of risk-informed regulation through which  
4 we strive to put focus on those issues that are most  
5 important based on their safety significance.

6 The NRC staff continues to evaluate and  
7 update key risk-informed decision making guidance,  
8 develop a graded approach where using risk information  
9 more fully in licensing reviews, enhance our  
10 communication of risk activities, and advance other  
11 risk-informed initiatives across the Agency.

12 This includes steps to ensure uniform  
13 implementation of backfitting regulations, improve  
14 training and oversight leading to more consistent  
15 identification and treatment of potential backfitting  
16 issues.

17 The conference breakout sessions will  
18 examine activities such as these in greater detail as  
19 well as many others as Brian has noted, such as cyber  
20 security, radiation protection, decommissioning,  
21 low-level waste, digital instrumentation and control,  
22 and emergency preparedness.

23 With this broad set of topical sessions I  
24 hope each of you will find the time you spend here at  
25 this conference to be very productive.

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1           As I reflect on the many activities  
2           underway if I had to describe my personal assessment  
3           of how NRC is doing in one sentence it would be I  
4           continue to be fully confident in our ability to fulfill  
5           our mission and yet never satisfy that we have perfected  
6           the means and methods of how we go about it, and that's  
7           okay.

8           The NRC is not complacent. We are a  
9           continuously-learning organization and an inquisitive  
10          bunch of people. Will we extract the right lessons and  
11          evolve in the right ways while staying ahead of the  
12          changing world around us? I don't think any  
13          organization knows that for sure. The proof will be  
14          in the doing.

15          In my view the staff's innovation and  
16          transformation efforts are central to charting the  
17          course to NRC's future. As a member of our Commission  
18          and as an NRC old-timer I actually flattered with the  
19          term OG, or old guard, of ten years I am fully committed  
20          to this process and to helping them be successful in  
21          any way that I can.

22          The way I see it the failure to adapt to  
23          change, standing still if you will, simply is not an  
24          option for this or any organization. Change is hard  
25          work though and I know that.

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1           So I look for inspiration where I can find  
2           it. Last fall I was invited back to my alma mater, the  
3           University of Michigan. The visit coincided with  
4           homecoming weekend, which was fitting I suppose.

5           As I walked the engineering camps at campus  
6           I did a lot of thinking about the intervening nearly  
7           30 years since I was a student there my first thought  
8           was where did all those years go, and that's a thought  
9           best not lingered over, the passage of time.

10          But since I needed to address some of the  
11          students and alumni my thoughts turned to why I chose  
12          to become an engineer in the first place and the truth  
13          is I think engineering is beautiful.

14          Engineers have been known to be much  
15          maligned as a personality type, if not a profession.  
16          So I decided that I wanted to dispel the notion in my  
17          remarks at the University that we cannot be poetic as  
18          engineers but maybe not being as poetic myself as I  
19          would like to be I was forced to turn to the words of  
20          others.

21          I was helped in this by the author H.G.  
22          Wells. I was reading, and I appreciate that some of  
23          you have said I always work in something about a book  
24          I am reading into my remarks, so here it goes, I was  
25          reading within the course of the last year what I found

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1 to be a really interesting history of the  
2 electrification of America and it was entitled "Empires  
3 of Light: Edison, Tesla, Westinghouse and the Race to  
4 the Electrify the World," and it's written by a  
5 historian, not a technical individual, so I think that  
6 it had maybe a broader scope than other histories of  
7 this same topic, but I came across a quote from H.G.  
8 Wells.

9 He was describing his visit in the year  
10 1895 to the Niagara Falls Power Station, which was the  
11 first major hydroelectric facility in the United  
12 States, in describing what he saw he wrote the  
13 following.

14 "These dynamos and turbines of the Niagara  
15 Falls Power Company impressed me far more profoundly  
16 than the Cave of the Winds are indeed to mind greater  
17 and more beautiful than accidental eddying of air  
18 beside a downpour.

19 They are well made visible, thought  
20 translated into easy and commanding things, they are  
21 clean, noiseless, starkly powerful. All the clatter  
22 of the early age of machinery is passed and gone here.

23 There is no smoke, no grit, no dirt at all.  
24 These are all together noble masses of machinery, huge,  
25 slumbering monsters, great sleeping tops that engineer

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1           irresistible forces in their sleep.

2                       All these great things are as silent, as  
3           wonderfully made as the heart in a living body, and  
4           stouter and stronger than that. I fell into a daydream  
5           of the coming power of man and how that power may be  
6           used by them."

7                       I think of those words every time I stand  
8           on a turbine deck at a nuclear power plant. The people  
9           in this room work in and around the most powerful  
10          technology on planet earth.

11                      On any given day that keeps me both  
12          inspired and humble and I hope it does you as well. I  
13          thank you for your kind attention and I am happy to take  
14          any questions you have.

15                      (Applause)

16                      CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Okay, Brian, what do  
17          we got?

18                      MR. HOLIAN: Good. I have a selection,  
19          Chairman, so we'll get to them. Chairman Svinicki, do  
20          you think the NRC will ever achieve being fully  
21          risk-informed?

22                      CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Well the question was  
23          made easy by the term "fully" because, well, I don't,  
24          I'm not trying to pick it apart, but I think, and I was  
25          asked last year about NRC's progress and journey

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1 towards risk-informed regulation and I think it really  
2 is that, a journey.

3 But I think over the course of time there  
4 can be a different pace of change that occurs and it  
5 may be in my opinion that with the dynamic environment  
6 right now NRC may stand at the threshold of maybe making  
7 more of a step change through the transformation work  
8 maybe even through the internal innovation cradle that  
9 we have created inside the Agency.

10 I don't think progress always occurs at a  
11 consistent pace and my 10-year observation of NRC I  
12 think that what's happening now is around maybe looking  
13 at we've gathered a lot of information, have we added  
14 to our knowledge in a way that we have the time and space  
15 to take a fundamental stepping back and really looking  
16 at targeting some areas where there could be a more  
17 transformational increase in our risk-informed  
18 regulation.

19 So I don't know that "fully," "fully" to  
20 me would imply that you wouldn't be continuing to gather  
21 risk insights and if nothing else as new technology is  
22 adopted you have to build a base of understanding and  
23 risk understanding and safety understanding of that  
24 technology.

25 So I think we'll always be adding to that

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1 and it comforts me that the NRC does have such a  
2 continuous learning approach to its work that I think  
3 -- I can't envision a future NRC 30 or 40 years from  
4 now that wouldn't still be seeking out those risk  
5 understandings and insights and then feeding them back  
6 into the process.

7 MR. HOLIAN: I've got at least five  
8 questions on one subject. I give credit, some  
9 well-prepared individual who has a typed printout, came  
10 prepared with questions they put on cards, so that's  
11 a new one for me.

12 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: You know, that's  
13 quite brilliant. I think that that's wonderful.

14 MR. HOLIAN: All five of them are very  
15 similar. At last year's RIC, Chairman, you expressed  
16 your support for making progress on digital I&C. We  
17 have seen very little significant movement this past  
18 year.

19 Why not? Is digital I&C still a top  
20 priority for the NRC? What is the Commission doing to  
21 drive progress within the staff? A couple of the other  
22 questions talk about the safety improvements that they  
23 hope that they can leverage and that aspects of digital  
24 I&C has been proven to reduce scram initiators on  
25 non-safety-related systems, so questioning our

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1 progress.

2 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: I think that -- I  
3 encourage the questioner and others, and I know there  
4 is broad interest in digital I&C, please question the  
5 NRC staff presenters.

6 I think that my assessment of the NRC staff  
7 is they are ready to have a vigorous dialogue on digital  
8 I&C and have been having it in various fora where they  
9 engaged outside of the NRC on this.

10 I think in my first year on this Commission  
11 in 2008 one of the things that I did was visit the  
12 nuclear Navy in the U.S. to talk about their success  
13 in adopting digital instrumentation and control  
14 technologies.

15 That was ten years ago and I am fairly  
16 confident in saying the following, if you were to ask  
17 any NRC subject matter expert or the NRC managers if  
18 they are content with the pace of issue resolution on  
19 digital I&C I am fairly confident they would tell you  
20 that they are not personally satisfied with it.

21 With that being said, I think that there  
22 have been a lot of issues that have been brought to the  
23 floor and I think that the notion, I think success on  
24 digital I&C could actually be a precursor to other kind  
25 of risk-informed approaches that could spread into

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1 other areas of the NRC's work.

2 So it may be a reason why it is, we're  
3 taking the time to work through with some finality the  
4 digital I&C questions because they may philosophically  
5 have connection to other modernized technology that we  
6 know will be coming our way and we'll want to be sure  
7 that as we approach digital I&C we set a path that is  
8 going to work in terms of a risk-informed approach  
9 overall to new technologies that are similar to what  
10 the regulated community is engaging us on now.

11 It does take a bit of a paradigm shift. I  
12 will admit that personally I view coming to some greater  
13 resolution on digital I&C I think that will be a leading  
14 indicator of NRC having confronted some tough issues  
15 on risk and being risk informed.

16 And I will say that I also observed that  
17 NRC makes a broad acknowledgment that digital I&C  
18 systems, in addition to being necessary to address  
19 obsolescence issues in the supply chain, also offer  
20 safety advantages and I think that NRC is very committed  
21 to moving through these issues so that those safety  
22 enhancements for operators can be, we can accomplish  
23 that in the United States.

24 MR. HOLIAN: Yes, thank you, Chairman.  
25 And I know at the transformation session this afternoon

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1 digital I&C will be one of the items brought up by Dan  
2 Dorman at the transformation session and I do  
3 highlight, as the Chairman mentioned, Session T8,  
4 Progress and Challenges in Implementing Digital I&C in  
5 the Nuclear Industry," so NRR is prepared to answer more  
6 in-depth questions at that session.

7 Chairman Svinicki, what do you worry about  
8 day-to-day versus year in and year out?

9 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: I think one of the  
10 luxuries for the members of our Commission is the  
11 tremendous technical depth in the Agency that allows  
12 us day-to-day to proceed with an extremely high  
13 confidence, and I know I do and I think this is true  
14 to all the members I have served with, you can go  
15 day-to-day with great confidence that should some event  
16 happen at an NRC-regulated facility we are going to be  
17 able to have the people and processes and capability  
18 to address that on behalf of the American people.

19 So that is a luxury to know that day-to-day  
20 just the basic operational issues are not something  
21 that I need to worry about because my confidence is so  
22 high and the quality of how we would respond to an event.

23 Year-to-year is a different question  
24 though because that is about peering over the horizon  
25 and saying for the time that I am at NRC am I

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1 contributing to putting in place the things that when  
2 I arrived my predecessors were thoughtful enough so  
3 that certain things I didn't have to immediately take  
4 on and worry.

5 I don't favor the term "leaving a legacy,"  
6 but I think all of us in our work say that I want that  
7 those who follow on after me will go, well, I didn't  
8 know that Kristine Svinicki but thank goodness that she  
9 thought that this might be a problem ten years from now  
10 and she at least started to encourage people to put  
11 something in place to address that.

12 So I think if year-to-year I worry about  
13 anything it's kind of about NRC as an organization, all  
14 of us, and the way the culture that we are creating,  
15 the way we are working with each other, and are we  
16 creating a legacy as kind of an organic organization  
17 that is going to make all of our successors, going to  
18 position them for success, and so I think year-to-year  
19 I hope I am being as thoughtful as my predecessors were.

20 MR. HOLIAN: A couple related to that  
21 topic on timing and in the future, there is two  
22 questions. One individual says I have been in nuclear  
23 power 47 years. Where do you see nuclear power going  
24 in America the next 47 years? That's prophetic.

25 And another question congratulating you on

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1 your ten years at the NRC. Where do you see yourself  
2 ten years from now?

3 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Okay. Well I didn't  
4 think I'd be standing here today, so it makes me humble  
5 about predictions. Isn't that supposed to be a fool's  
6 errand to make predictions?

7 I think -- So this is really me and this  
8 is not coming from anybody else, but I have been in --  
9 So I don't have 47 years in and around the nuclear  
10 profession but I do have at the end of this year it will  
11 be 28 years, not counting my time in the educational  
12 system.

13 So I have observed things from, you know,  
14 being in a more technology development environment at  
15 the Department of Energy, being in a kind of a pure,  
16 raw, policy-making environment of the Congress and  
17 Capitol Hill and then coming here and seeing, you know,  
18 a kind of exquisite high fidelity mission execution  
19 that I think, and I offer that so sincerely as a  
20 complement to NRC as an enduring organization and I  
21 think they should pride themselves on that.

22 But I know it's ego to feel like you stand  
23 in uniquely dynamic times, but, gosh, it sure feels like  
24 that to me. It feels -- Right now I don't know if it's  
25 just I've progressed through enough of my career that

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1 I have enough runway, that I have enough runway still  
2 in front of me but enough in my rearview mirror that  
3 I -- that was a horrible mixed metaphor.

4 (Laughter)

5 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: That, you know, I have  
6 some perspective and maybe a little bit of going forward  
7 run time that it seems like the future of nuclear in  
8 the United States is going to be determined by what  
9 happens, and this is a crazy thing I shouldn't say as  
10 Chairman, I think it's going to be determined by what  
11 happens in the next five to seven years.

12 And so depending on what happens in the  
13 next five to seven years I would be able to answer that  
14 question about 47 years from now.

15 But I think that the paradigms all around  
16 large light-water reactors, the program that we have  
17 in the U.S., I think it's at a pivot point and if for  
18 the part of the mission we execute, for the part of the  
19 mission that technology designers execute for those who  
20 support the whole nuclear enterprise, I think unless  
21 there are some kind of experimentation, some pilots,  
22 modeling of new paradigms, I am not sure that the old  
23 models can carry us through the next 47 years.

24 And by that I say, you know, I think the  
25 whole business of nuclear by my observation has changed

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1 and, therefore, the fact that you can have a design  
2 certification review in front of the NRC for, you know,  
3 even a model milestone of four years or six years or  
4 eight years, if you talk to the communities that are  
5 investing the future of nuclear they're not going to  
6 hold a business case together that long.

7 So I think that, you know, some of what you  
8 see here, our Innovation Forum, which is inward looking  
9 and those are the tweaks to the process, the  
10 transformation initiative that you will hear more  
11 about, I think fundamentally that is NRC's recognition  
12 of the fact that we've got to examine maybe, again, not  
13 our core mission changing, but some of the methods and  
14 modes through which we conduct it.

15 And so we are looking at it, and if you want  
16 to you can fault NRC for a lot of things, we are pretty  
17 persnickety, we're very deliberate, we're very  
18 thorough, if that bothers people, but we're not closed  
19 off.

20 I just, you know, that's one thing, I think  
21 there is a lot of defensiveness and debates about policy  
22 and stuff going on right now. This is the least  
23 defensive organization with which I have worked.

24 I think there is an authentic spirit of  
25 saying we don't have the answers and so when I engage

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1       policymakers I work hard to communicate how genuine  
2       that is on our part.

3                If we are not doing enough to prepare for  
4       advanced reactors here's what we are doing, what do you  
5       see that's missing, tell me and I will take it back,  
6       and we will take it on board because we do, that doesn't  
7       mean our proposed approach to it would be the same as  
8       anybody else's.

9                But you can't fault this place for being,  
10       you know, thinking we have all the answers and being  
11       closed off.  If you see it tell me about it, but I don't  
12       see it.

13               MR. HOLIAN:  Okay.  Thank you, Chairman.  
14       A couple of questions on timing of items.  Why hasn't  
15       the Commission completed its deliberations on the final  
16       50.46(c) rule?  That's been up there.

17                There seems to be a second question on  
18       votes by the Commission, it is a low level, could you  
19       comment on that progress?

20               CHAIRMAN SVINICKI:  Yes.  As everyone  
21       knows our Commission under law has the potential to have  
22       turnover on new members and members leaving our  
23       Commission, so every year we confront this.

24                But we have not been at our full compliment  
25       of five commissioners for some years now and now we have

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1       been at three commissioners for some period of time.

2               Rulemaking is very, very important -- Some  
3       of the question seems to go around the rulemaking votes  
4       and the rules that are in process at the Agency. We  
5       have regulations on the books that have not been  
6       revisited in 20 or 25 years.

7               So one of the reasons that I as a member  
8       of the Commission is I have always taken rulemaking as  
9       one of the most sober and important things I do is that  
10      upon completion of a final rule that rule might stay  
11      as a regulatory requirement for decades to come and not  
12      be revisited in the absence of a need to revisit it.

13              So getting it right is a lot more important  
14      than getting it done super quickly. We use other  
15      instruments for safety or security issues that need to  
16      be addressed immediately. We have many other  
17      authorities we can do immediately effective orders.

18              So rulemaking is about putting in place the  
19      things that are likely to be in place for a very long  
20      period of time. The Administrative Procedure Act,  
21      under which we are required to develop those  
22      regulations, in general is a process that takes I think  
23      three years if you do it quick, five, six years is not  
24      unheard of for a regulation.

25              So where members of our Commission need

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1 time to investigate issues around pending either a  
2 proposed rule or a draft final rule, I know I approach  
3 that with care, I have observed every other member of  
4 the Commission I have served with over the years, takes  
5 that as a very, very serious responsibility.

6 And I think there are a lot of benefits to  
7 rulemaking but haste is not a positive attribute. Now  
8 some may say, you know, something taking a couple of  
9 years is not hasty.

10 The other thing, the reason I mentioned the  
11 composition of the Commission is that although we have  
12 the authority to move forward with three members,  
13 having served on five-member commissions I observed  
14 that we have the greatest confidence as a Commission  
15 that each of the unique perspectives brought by a member  
16 of the Commission adds value and completeness and  
17 thoroughness to our deliberation on the final product,  
18 which, again, might be in place for some decades to  
19 come.

20 So where you see that action is fast or slow  
21 by our Commission the tempo of our work is something  
22 that we work as a deliberative body of three, four, or  
23 five, to pace that.

24 And I am very -- I have been blessed to  
25 serve on commissions that where a colleague needed more

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1 time to continue to work through issues, we tend to  
2 respect that with each other, again, knowing that where  
3 are the Agency needs to act quickly rulemaking is not  
4 the means through which we do that.

5 MR. HOLIAN: Thank you, Chairman. This  
6 questioner has enjoyed your references to popular  
7 culture in the past. What film or movie reference  
8 comes to mind when you think about your experience as  
9 chairman versus a commissioner?

10 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Oh, gosh, so many  
11 answers. And I don't share everything that goes  
12 through my head. Those of you who work with me probably  
13 think do you ever have an unexpressed thought.

14 You know, it's interesting, this, because  
15 actually I do have a lot of cable channels that run  
16 movies all the time and so I tend to see my old  
17 favorites, you know, I'm folding laundry or something  
18 on the weekends, so I have something on in the  
19 background.

20 And recently something has been brought  
21 back forward, although it's a film from 1980, I think.  
22 I remember I first saw it I was in high school, but it  
23 -- so I'll get to this in a minute, but Coal Miner's  
24 Daughter, I don't know if anyone has ever seen that.

25 My grandfather was an iron miner, although

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1 it's not quite as quippy to say iron miner's  
2 granddaughter, but Coal Miner's Daughter is a really  
3 great movie, and we have an international audience  
4 here, I don't know if people know this film, but it is  
5 based on an autobiography by the first lady of country  
6 music, Ms. Loretta Lynn.

7 And one of the reasons the movie inspires  
8 is just I have a view, I am a fan of popular culture,  
9 but I think that women in the arts, we look at them as  
10 being entertaining and everything, but the truth is  
11 during certain periods of time in our history, and  
12 maybe, too, today, think about those women had to be  
13 entrepreneurs, businesswomen, in addition to being  
14 tremendously creative, brilliant artists so much.

15 And often I have to assume they had to do  
16 all this in an environment while caretaking, maybe  
17 providing for their families, or not being treated all  
18 that well all the time probably.

19 I think that's probably true, but this is  
20 a story of the hard life that Loretta Lynn had and she  
21 goes on to be very, very successful, of course, but she  
22 has a moment where the success and the stress traveling  
23 all the time, trying to care for her family, she has  
24 a rather epic meltdown on stage, which I am not about  
25 to reenact right now, and I am not having a meltdown

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1 being Chairman, that's not the point of this story.

2 But they have a point in that meltdown --  
3 And, again, she won the academy award for best actress,  
4 if you have not watched it, I recommend it. If you just  
5 look at the subtleties of Sissy Spacek's performance  
6 as Loretta, she just embodied the woman and just the  
7 subtlety of how she portrayed such a big personality  
8 and she deserved it.

9 And she did all her own singing if my memory  
10 serves, so it was just an amazing, amazing performance,  
11 speaking of another woman in the arts. But in that kind  
12 of stream of consciousness on stage, I am finally  
13 answering this question, she gets to a point, Doo, her  
14 husband, Doolittle, is, you know, kind of in the aisle  
15 and he's looking at her and he is seeing her kind of  
16 just collapse from exhaustion almost, but she said, you  
17 know, I wanted to come out here and just tell something  
18 to all you all good people, she said Doo doesn't want  
19 me to say anything.

20 So she reminds me a little bit of myself  
21 because I am like, oh, I shouldn't be saying this but  
22 I'm going to say it anyway, but she says -- and her good  
23 friend was Patsy Cline.

24 She actually really admired Patsy Cline,  
25 but she said, so she's got this stream of consciousness

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1 and she goes Patsy's always saying, and, girl, you got  
2 to run your own life.

3 So that's what I think of as Chairman  
4 because, and Mr. Burns knows this really well, is that  
5 the pace of small items demanding your attention every  
6 single day, so the core of what we do, chairman, member  
7 of the Commission, all those core authorities are the  
8 same.

9 We have the same vote in the process but  
10 the number of items of maybe not the greatest  
11 significance but time-sensitivity that demands your  
12 attention, so I think there is some sympathy for anyone  
13 in this room knows what it is to come into your office  
14 and feel like they just ran your whole day.

15 So sometimes I have to take a breath and  
16 say, girl, you got to run your own life, so I've to set  
17 my own priorities. The other great thing, and I don't  
18 do a great Kentucky accent, but that was pretty darn  
19 good, but the other thing she says to do later on,  
20 because he's always making this sound in his chest  
21 throughout the movie, and it was Tommy Lee Jones, who  
22 also did a great job, he might have been nominated but  
23 I don't think he got the Oscar for best supporting  
24 actor, but she says -- I got to take, I got to make  
25 sure get this, and she goes you sound like old bear

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1 growling.

2 (Laughter)

3 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: That's pretty good.  
4 It's pretty good. Well, you go listen to the movie,  
5 that was pretty good.

6 (Applause)

7 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Oh, the other,  
8 there's the other -- Okay, so my final great line from  
9 that movie is Doolittle is talking about growing up,  
10 I think he grew up in West Virginia, anyway I just, I  
11 love the culture of that part of America, which I don't  
12 think we have honored as much Appalachia and that part  
13 of the country, I mean some of our most authentic  
14 culture, American, pure American culture comes from  
15 that part of the United States, but, so Doolittle, this  
16 is the one line of his, and I don't have his accent down  
17 as well, but he goes, honey, there's three things you  
18 grow up in West Virginia, you got three choice, coal  
19 mine, moonshine, or move it on down the line.

20 (Laughter and applause)

21 MR. HOLIAN: Very good, thank you.  
22 Chairman, St. Patrick's Day is coming up, I don't know  
23 if you have an Irish accent in there, but I won't ask.  
24 That's my side of the family.

25 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: I do not.

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1                   MR. HOLIAN: Okay, Irish joke. That's my  
2 side also if you need to -- Chairman, one last question,  
3 and, Vic, we saved some for you here, but on innovation  
4 and transformation there were a couple related  
5 questions.

6                   You know, do you believe incremental  
7 change is enough in the current environment or is more  
8 needed? It sounds like an NRC staffer had a question  
9 about I am young in my career at the NRC what can I do  
10 to drive change and modernize regulatory activities?

11                   And another spin on that was should I as  
12 an NRC member encourage innovation and new technology,  
13 is that my role in the NRC mission?

14                   CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: That's a great set of  
15 questions. I think the first of those about  
16 incremental change versus step change, I think that I  
17 have had remarks around that in some of the other  
18 answers that I have given and in my remarks to say that,  
19 and I don't know, and it will be NRC employees to decide  
20 what, where the transformation initiative goes and  
21 things like that.

22                   Of course there will be, ultimately, I  
23 think proposals for the Commission, but taking on the  
24 hard work of seeing if there is transformation  
25 opportunity and achieving it that is going to fall to

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1 many of the NRC staff that are probably here listening  
2 or back over at the office building making sure that  
3 everything is functioning well right now.

4 I think the role of every person in any  
5 organization is to show up and don't withhold their best  
6 ideas. I spent a lot of the early part of my career,  
7 and I know this is inconceivable based on sitting here  
8 even this morning, but I was afraid to speak up because  
9 I just, I felt, I had the surely's as I call them.

10 Surely there is somebody else in this room  
11 that knows better than me. Surely there is somebody  
12 else, you know, those people been here longer than me  
13 and they know better, and I just, at some point I  
14 realized that first of all the thing you are thinking  
15 that your lack of, you know, like my idea is probably  
16 not that good I shouldn't say it, a lot of other people  
17 in that room are withholding their ideas as well and  
18 we're not going to get there if that's our approach.

19 So I think it's everybody's job. That's  
20 been my approach in my career once I had this point of  
21 understanding that I realized that I should toss my  
22 ideas out into the mix and I wanted to be part of  
23 creating the organization that I was showing up to every  
24 day.

25 So I think whether or not it entuses you

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1 I bet you have something that is of value to somebody  
2 else if you put it forward and, you know, I think the  
3 pace of change is something that it will be uneven and  
4 we'll continue to have an uneven pace of change, but  
5 I am excited for NRC's future just very sincerely.

6 And that doesn't mean that we don't have  
7 a lot of hard stuff to take onboard and that, you know,  
8 we are doing equally well in every area, but I stand  
9 here very optimistic, as I said, fully confident but  
10 never satisfied, and that's where I am and I approach  
11 my work that way and I think both of those things can  
12 co-exist.

13 MR. HOLIAN: Thank you, Chairman  
14 Svinicki.

15 (Applause)

16