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NECX Plenary: The Nuclear Opportunity has Arrived and it's Bigger than Texas **August 25, 2026** **Chairman Ho Nieh** **(remarks as prepared for delivery)**

Good morning, everyone. Thank you to ANS and NEI for bringing together the leaders and talent needed to turn this nuclear opportunity into something bigger than Texas.

America leading the world again in nuclear energy—that's what this opportunity means.

About six months ago, when I spoke at the NRC's annual conference, I said there was a new NRC. One that is not an impediment to nuclear innovation. One that enables and accelerates the safe and secure deployment of nuclear technologies. That is still the case today.

Since then, the NRC has been advancing safety-focused, enabling regulation by aligning our requirements with actual risks and operational needs, by adapting our licensing frameworks for new technologies and by adding regulatory flexibility where safety is maintained.

But the change is not just happening at the NRC. America's electricity demand is growing. New nuclear power projects are moving ahead. Additional capital investments are being made. Nuclear technology companies are making major commitments to their designs. Advanced reactors are moving through DOE demonstrations toward deployment—the July Fourth criticality achievements were an important milestone for this story of American nuclear innovation. Across the board, the conversation is shifting from whether nuclear has a future to how quickly and successfully America can deliver it at scale.

The NRC is keeping pace with this shift. Over the last several months, one consistent message I've heard from many is that the NRC is no longer seen as the problem. That is meaningful recognition of the extraordinary efforts of the dedicated NRC staff in advancing the reforms driven by President Trump and Congress for predictable and efficient regulation. Investment and innovation in American nuclear energy require regulatory certainty. We are in the most comprehensive period of regulatory reform in over 50 years, and the purpose is clear: to help make this nuclear opportunity possible and reestablish America's leadership in nuclear energy.

And the results of this new NRC are increasingly tangible. They are in the Federal Register as proposed rules that are removing red tape and moving us toward more risk-informed, performance-based approaches. They are in accelerated licensing schedules with real efficiency gains. They are in licensing decisions that will deliver the benefits from the safe use of nuclear power to the American people.

We recently issued two subsequent license renewals in under twelve months, keeping over 2.5 GW of electricity on America's grid for another twenty years. Just think, over a year ago, subsequent license renewals were taking over eighteen months.

We are on track for completing two construction permit reviews before the end of this year—TVA's BWRX-300 project at Clinch River and X-energy's high-temperature gas reactor project in Long Mott, Texas. Both reviews are being done on accelerated schedules.

In fact, we just held the mandatory hearing for TVA's BWRX-300 project using a new streamlined mandatory hearing process. This new process shaves two to three months off the overall schedule while ensuring public participation in the process.

On top of that, we are partnering with the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission on joint technical reviews and sharing construction experience from the Darlington BWRX-300 project. This cooperation will help accelerate BWRX-300 deployment in America.

We are supporting the restart reviews of Palisades, the Crane Clean Energy Center and Duane Arnold. NRC's work is tracking with the applicants' schedules to ensure there are no delays for the safe return of almost another 2.5 GW from these power plants.

We are actively reviewing uranium enrichment facility applications to help close an important strategic gap in the United States. For one of these reviews, the Commission recently approved mandatory hearing efficiencies to accelerate its schedule—and we did it in a way that ensures safety, follows all statutes and preserves public participation.

We are establishing pathways to use experience and information from DOE and DOW reactor projects to support more efficient NRC licensing of future commercial applications of these technologies.

And we are working diligently to finalize the many EO 14300 proposed rules we published over the last few months. I anticipate final rules starting to hit the Federal Register toward the end of this year and into next year.

The success of these reforms depends on how the NRC operates every day. That is why we established our LEAD framework—Leadership, Excellence, Accountability and Discipline. This management model reinforces clear direction, high standards, ownership of results and systematic execution. We are embedding those expectations into how we lead and continuously improve the agency. That is how the NRC will deliver safety decisions that are credible, predictable and timely.

Writing new rules and creating new licensing frameworks is only the beginning. The real work ahead of us is implementing them successfully. And for many of the new NRC rules, we cannot do that without you.

The regulator can remove unnecessary friction from the process. But we cannot make an immature design mature. We cannot write an applicant's application. We cannot manufacture components or fuel. And we cannot build a project on schedule. Those are challenges this entire room has to solve together so America can lead the world again in nuclear energy.

As we continue to move faster together, we must ensure that the high levels of safety performance that exist today are maintained across the entire nuclear industry.

The NRC understands that our work is essential not only to America's energy security but also to our national security. When America is ready to move forward with real commercial applications, the NRC is ready to deliver.

Thank you.