



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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REMARKS OF NRC CHAIRMAN GREGORY B. JACZKO AT COMMISSION BRIEFING ON DECOMMISSIONING FUNDING

Good morning. The Commission will hear today from both staff and external stakeholders on decommissioning funding issues.

Decommissioning is an issue that really demonstrates the breadth of the NRC's regulatory work. Our responsibilities in this area start with making sure that our licensees are setting aside adequate funds or providing other appropriate financial assurance while they are operating to cover their decommissioning costs after they shut down. Our responsibilities don't end until decades later once licensed operations have ceased and the agency oversees the actual cleanup efforts at the site or facility.

The agency requires licensees to provide detailed reports at least once every two years on the financial investments and instruments that they have set aside to cover their future decommissioning costs. During the economic downturn, we have seen that licensees have experienced some challenges in maintaining sufficient decommissioning funds. Overall though, I believe that the experience of the last two years has shown that our regulatory approach is generally sound. Most of our licensees maintained adequate funds, and most of those who experienced shortfalls already have addressed them.

During our first panel, we will hear from several stakeholders – including state, public advocacy, and licensee representatives – who will provide several different perspectives on the funding challenges that some of our licensees have experienced. We will then hear from the staff on our second panel this morning. The staff will provide a general overview of our decommissioning funding regulations, review some of the challenges our licensees have experienced in meeting their financial assurance requirements, and discuss the proposed changes to our guidance and rules.

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