



CHAIRMAN

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

August 27, 2020

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman, Committee on Environment
and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your July 23, 2020, letter requesting that the NRC, as part of its effort to develop an advanced reactor Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS), broaden the scope of the planned GEIS to be inclusive of additional advanced nuclear technologies, such as light-water small modular reactors or larger non-light-water advanced reactors, and, to the extent practicable, address other topics generically.

The NRC continues to explore ways to enhance the efficiency of its environmental review process and to evaluate the approaches and issues discussed in your letter with respect to advanced reactors. As you are aware, the Commission is currently considering the staff's recommendation to develop an advanced reactor GEIS using a technology-neutral plant parameter envelope approach to bound small scale advanced nuclear reactor projects.¹

In April, the NRC staff initiated a scoping process to solicit input from the public on the proposed approach to the GEIS. Among other things, the staff held a webinar in May 2020, and the comment period for the scoping process closed on June 30, 2020. Based on the comments received, the staff is evaluating an expanded use of performance-based plant parameters that would reduce the reliance on a specified power level. The staff is also considering how a more technology inclusive, performance-based approach to the GEIS could align with the regulatory framework for advanced reactors required under the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act. A GEIS could also support the analysis of alternative sites, although there are some aspects of this type of analysis that could not be resolved on a generic basis. The NRC staff is looking at these approaches as well as the other issues you raise in your letter as it concludes the scoping process.

¹ SECY-20-0020, "Results of Exploratory Process for Developing a Generic Environmental Impact Statement for the Construction and Operation of Advanced Nuclear Reactors," ADAMS Accession No. ML20052D175.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me or have your staff contact Eugene Dacus, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Svinicki', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kristine L. Svinicki

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman, Committee on Environment
and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Braun
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510