



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

November 12, 2020

CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Mike Braun
Chairman, Subcommittee on Clean Air
and Nuclear Safety
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 submitting the "Semiannual Status Report on the Licensing Activities and Regulatory Duties of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission." The enclosed report covers NRC activities from April 1, 2020, through September 30, 2020, and includes a list of rulemaking activities, their priority and schedule, and actions taken to adhere to the backfit rule, as directed in the Joint Explanatory Statement that accompanied Division C of the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020.

During this period, the NRC completed several noteworthy regulatory activities. In April 2020, the NRC staff issued a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement as part of the review of the Dominion Energy Virginia's subsequent license renewal application to operate the Surry Power Station Units 1 and 2 for an additional 20 years. The NRC staff also approved the license transfer for the Crystal River 3 nuclear power plant, as that site continues the decommissioning process. In May 2020, the NRC staff sought public comment on the Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) scoping process for advanced reactor designs. In June 2020, NRC accepted for review the Aurora reactor combined license application from Oklo Power LLC for an advanced non-light water reactor and subsequently published in the *Federal Register* a notice of opportunity to intervene in an adjudicatory hearing on the application. In July 2020, the NRC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Environmental Protection Agency to improve coordination and cooperation in the regulation of the *in-situ* recovery process of uranium extraction. The NRC also submitted a report to Congress identifying best practices for Community Advisory Boards for former nuclear power plant sites that are decommissioning, as required by the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act. In August 2020, the NRC staff held webinars seeking public comment on updating the GEIS for renewing reactor licenses. The NRC staff also issued the final safety evaluation report for the NuScale small modular reactor design, completing the final phase of this review.

Other Noteworthy Activities in the Past 6 Months

From April 2020 to September 2020, the NRC staff conducted 43 security inspections at commercial nuclear power plants and Category I fuel cycle facilities, including one force-on-force inspection involving simulated attacks on the selected facility to test the effectiveness of the licensee's physical protection program. As detailed in the enclosed report, due to concerns

related to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the agency suspended full NRC-conducted force-on-force inspections for the remainder of calendar year 2020.

Also, from April 2020 through September 2020, the agency noticed 431 public meetings in the Washington, DC, area and in States with NRC-licensed or proposed facilities to address a range of NRC issues. Due to health and safety concerns related to the COVID-19 public health emergency, 417 of these meetings were held virtually via Web-based platforms or teleconference. Additionally, during this time period, the NRC processed 131 Freedom of Information Act requests and received an additional 115 new requests.

During this reporting period, the NRC took significant actions in response to COVID-19. The agency implemented precautionary measures to ensure the health and safety of its workforce, licensees' staff, and stakeholders in accordance with guidance provided by the Federal Government, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of Personnel Management, as well as State and local authorities. The NRC took a number of steps to protect public health and safety while working to strike the right balance between conducting inspection and oversight activities and limiting opportunities for the spread of the virus. Impacts to NRC licensing activities and regulatory duties during this reporting period were minimal and, where appropriate, are noted in the attached report.

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

Sincerely,



Kristine L. Svinicki

Enclosure:
As stated

cc: Senator Sheldon Whitehouse

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable Mike Braun
Chairman, Subcommittee on Clean Air
and Nuclear Safety
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
cc: Senator Sheldon Whitehouse

The Honorable Bobby L. Rush
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
cc: Representative Fred Upton

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman, Committee on Environment
and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
cc: Senator Thomas R. Carper

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman, Committee on Energy
and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
cc: Representative Greg Walden

The Honorable Paul Tonko
Chairman, Subcommittee on Environment
and Climate Change
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
cc: Representative John Shimkus

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
cc: Representative Mike Simpson

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
cc: Senator Dianne Feinstein