



CHAIRMAN

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

May 9, 2022

The Honorable Edward Markey
Chairman, Subcommittee on Clean Air,
Climate, 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 October 1, 2021, through March 31, 2022, and includes a list of rulemaking activities, their priority and schedule, and actions taken to adhere to the backfit rule, as directed in House Report 116-449 accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021.

During this period, the NRC completed several noteworthy regulatory activities. In November 2021, the Commission approved a proposed rule to amend agency regulations for nuclear power plants transitioning from operations to decommissioning. The NRC staff terminated the license for the Humboldt Bay Power Plant, Unit 3, releasing the site for unrestricted use following the successful decommissioning of the facility. In December 2021, the NRC approved the transfer of licenses for Palisades and Big Rock Point nuclear power plants and their associated spent fuel storage facilities to a decommissioning operator. In January 2022, the NRC denied, without prejudice, an application from Oklo Power, LLC to build and operate its Aurora compact fast reactor, as detailed in the enclosed report. In February 2022, the NRC published in the *Federal Register* a notice of opportunity to intervene in an adjudicatory hearing and began seeking public views on environmental issues for consideration related to Kairos Power's application for a construction permit to build the "Hermes" test reactor at a site in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and published a notice of opportunity to request a limited scope adjudicatory hearing regarding Southern Nuclear Operating Company's notice to load nuclear fuel into the Vogtle Unit 4 reactor beginning in September. In March 2022, the NRC finalized a White finding following the completion of a special inspection at Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station, as detailed in the enclosed report, and issued annual assessment letters for all operating nuclear plants in the United States, which included 91 reactors assessed to be performing in the highest safety category and two reactors falling into the second highest safety category.

Other Noteworthy Activities in the Past 6 Months

In March 2022, the NRC staff released its final report from its special inspection at the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) test reactor. The inspection was launched in February 2021, following an event at the reactor. The final report identified seven apparent violations of NRC requirements that are being considered for escalated enforcement action, including a civil penalty. In accordance with the NRC Enforcement Policy, NIST opted to address the apparent violations through a mediated Alternative Dispute Resolution process, which is scheduled to take place with the NRC staff in May 2022. The NRC will conduct supplemental inspections to inform a decision on restart, which would require NRC authorization. Results of the special inspection and any enforcement decisions will be provided in the next semiannual report, when related oversight activities have been completed.

From October 2021 through March 2022, the NRC staff conducted 95 security inspections at commercial nuclear power plants and Category I fuel cycle facilities. This includes a total of 10 force-on-force inspections involving simulated attacks on the selected facility to test the effectiveness of the licensee's physical security program. As detailed in the enclosed report, the agency conducted three full-scope force-on-force inspections, three modified full-scope force-on-force inspections (using COVID-19 precautions), and four limited-scope inspections at sites where the full-scope inspections could not be completed due to local COVID-19 hardship conditions.

The NRC continued using COVID-19 precautionary measures to help 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 impacts to NRC licensing activities and regulatory duties during this reporting period were minimal and, where appropriate, are noted in the enclosed report.

From October 2021 through March 2022, the NRC completed recruitment efforts for our Summer Student Intern program and anticipates having approximately 70 new and returning students onboard during summer 2022. Additionally, the NRC recruited 25 recent university graduates majoring in engineering and science for our second Nuclear Regulator Apprenticeship Network cohort. They are expected to join the agency in late summer 2022. To address current and anticipated vacancies in the next 12-18 months, the Chief Human Capital Officer developed a strategy for a significant recruitment effort to occur throughout FY 2022. The strategy will ensure that the agency continues to fulfill its important safety and security mission well into the future.

Also, from October 2021 through March 2022, the NRC held 429 public meetings to address a range of NRC issues. The NRC also processed 113 Freedom of Information Act requests and received an additional 110 requests during the reporting period.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. T. Hanson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "C" being particularly large and stylized.

Christopher T. Hanson

Enclosure:
As stated

cc: Senator James Inhofe

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable Edward Markey
Chairman, Subcommittee on Clean Air,
Climate, and Nuclear Safety
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
cc: Senator James Inhofe

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

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

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 Paul Tonko
Chairman, Subcommittee on Environment
and Climate Change
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
cc: Representative David B. McKinley

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 Dianne Feinstein
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
cc: Senator John Kennedy