

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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37TH ANNUAL REGULATORY INFORMATION CONFERENCE

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EDO PLENARY

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WEDNESDAY

MARCH 12, 2025

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The Session was held at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel & Conference Center and via virtual platform, at 10:30 a.m. EDT.

SPEAKERS

MIRELA GAVRILAS, Executive Director for Operations (EDO), NRC

SABRINA D. ATACK, Deputy Director, Office of International Programs (OIP), NRC

JACK GEISNER, Administrator, Region III, NRC

JOHN W. LUBINSKI, Director, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NMSS), NRC

OWEN BARWELL, Chief Financial Officer, NRC

MIKE F. KING, Special Assistant for the ADVANCE Act, NRC

JOHN TAPPERT, Acting Director, RES

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

10:29 a.m.

MR. TAPPERT: We're about to start the next plenary session. And, it is my pleasure to introduce Mirela, for her first EDO RIC plenary.

Dr. Mirela Gavrilas is the Executive Director for Operations of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

She has been with the agency for 20 years. Among her most notable accomplishments are contributions to the Be RiskSMART decisionmaking framework.

The construction permit review for the SHINE medical isotope production facility; NRC's original Accident Tolerant Fuel Plan; and, security considerations and rulemakings for licensing advanced reactors.

She holds degrees in nuclear engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University of Maryland at College Park.

And with that, Mirela, you have the floor.

DR. GAVRILAS: Thank you, John.

Okay, let's keep the applause until we earn them.

Good morning everyone. So, the RIC provides us with a great opportunity for the staff and everybody in this room, to hear what the Commission is thinking.

For all of us to understand external happenings

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directly from external stakeholders; and most importantly, for the staff to receive feedback on the activities that we undertake.

So, thank you all for being here, and a very sincere thanks to the person or the persons who brought rain to Washington, D.C. We really needed it.

So, the people on the stage are representing many staff who over the past few months, have come up with a lot of great ideas, and have taken suggestions from external stakeholders and turned them into practicable recommendations for improving our timeliness and efficiency.

So allow me to take a couple of moments to introduce them. I'm going to start with my friend Sabrina Atack, who is the Deputy Director of the Office of International Programs.

And, she is the lead for NRC's developing the implementation strategy for the mission statement.

Sabrina began her career as a reactor systems engineer in the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

Since that time, she served as a vendor inspector and the technical reviewer for both currently operating reactors and new reactors.

She was a team lead in our office for Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, affectionately known as NMSS.

A branch chief for source management in the same office. As an executive, she led security operations and later

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physical and cybersecurity policy formulation. She supported Jack Geisner in Region III before assuming her current position.

So before Sabrina joined the NRC, she worked for the Department of Defense at the Puget Sound Shipyard.

She holds a bachelor's of science degree in physics, and a master's degree in nuclear engineering.

On the more interesting side, Sabrina has a wicked sense of humor, which she hones by reading satire.

She is also very competitive when playing Scrabble and she, according to her, she often wins against her three kids and her adopted greyhound.

Next to Sabrina is Jack Geisner, who is the Region III administrator. And, Jack brings extensive oversight expertise to the ADVANCE Act Advisory Group.

Most of the folk other than Sabrina, are closely linked to our ADVANCE Act activities.

So Jack started out in the NRC go figure, as a reactor engineer in Region III. He served as resident and senior resident inspector at Palisades, before assuming a supervisory position also in Region III.

Jack had executive responsibilities for both reactors, and materials related activities before assuming the leadership of the Region III office.

Before joining the NRC, Jack was an officer in the

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U.S. Navy, and worked at D.C. Cook as an assistant operations manager, and then an engineering director.

Jack was also a licensed SRO, we're talking about the SROs this morning, paying them due homage, at the Salem Nuclear Generating Station.

He received a bachelor's degree in physics from the Naval Academy, and a master's degree in national security affairs, from the Naval War College.

So, Jack is a total people's person, even though he is the poster child introvert. Because of that, he works very hard to build and sustain relationships with his staff, and his peers. And we all benefit from that engagement.

He loves being on or near the water, and he's sailed the seven seas. Wow.

I'm going to talk about John Lubinski, another ADVANCE team advisor. He is the Office Director for Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, and he is contributing his wealth of expertise in both rulemaking and licensing, to the advisory team.

John has joined the NRC as a mechanical engineer in NMSS, and also served as a senior enforcement specialist in the Office of Enforcement.

He assumed supervisory responsibilities for inspections and fuel manufacturing, before becoming an executive.

As a member of the executive service, he worked in

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both technical and program organizations in all the program offices.

Nuclear Reactor Regulation, Nuclear Materials and Safeguard, Security and Incident Response, and Regulatory Research.

In 2019 John became the Director of NMSS. He holds a bachelor's of science degree in mechanical engineering from my undergrad alma mater, the University of Maryland.

John is a fervent supporter of Baltimore and Maryland sports teams. He wears purple throughout football season, or at least until the Ravens are done playing.

He enjoys traveling with his wife, and he golfs. He emphasizes that his golfing is more of an addiction, than an enjoyment.

Owen Barwell is our Chief Financial Officer, and our ADVANCE Act advisor who brings not only his budgetary wisdom to the team, but also great experience in many things mission support related.

So, Owen has been with the NRC for about 9 months, not that you would know it by the way he interacts with all of us. He's integrated seamlessly.

He most recently served as CFO for Independence Hydrogen, an early stage company processing industrial waste gas streams to produce low-carbon hydrogen. He continues to serve on

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their board.

Owen previous served as CFO for the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, for nearly 9 years.

NREL is one of the U.S. Department of Energy 17 national laboratory with the primary focus on renewable energy research.

Owen also served on the board of managers of the Idaho National Laboratory and if I remember correctly, NASA at some point.

So, he does a lot. He has his fingers in a lot of government and private industry activities that serve us very well when he transfers that knowledge to the rest of us in the agency.

So, Owen has been a member of the executive service since 2007; he started out at DOE in that leadership capacity.

So, what we've learned about Owen is that he competed in three Ironman triathlons, and I think that that's extremely impressive.

But what I really appreciate about Owen, is that he roasts his own coffee beans and I sometimes benefit from his roasting coffee beans, yum.

And if you have a chance to chat with Owen, just ask him how he came about with Chewy's Coffee as a name for his roasted beans.

And last but definitely not least, Mike King, who has

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probably worked with many of you in his capacity as point of contact for all things ADVANCE Act over the last few months.

And, he's done a brilliant job and we're all grateful to him for undertaking that tasking.

He started at the NRC as a resident inspector. He was a resident inspector at Shearon Harris.

Became team leader responsible for the bi-annual problem and identification and resolution inspection program, and the ROP program update.

He supervised the inspectors responsible for reactor as well as fire protection and cybersecurity activities, before becoming an executive for reactor oversight in NRR and fuel cycle, and for fuel cycle facilities in NMSS.

Mike also served in the Vogtle project office before undertaking his position as Deputy Office Director, in NRR.

A few days ago, we announced that Mike will succeed Scott Morris, as Deputy EDO for reactors.

Prior to joining the NRC, Mike worked for General Electric energy, and served as U.S. Navy nuclear engineer qualified for, as a submarine officer.

Mike holds degrees from the U.S. Naval Academy, the Georgia Institute of Technology, and the George Washington University.

Mike King is a car nut who sometimes parks his pride

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and joy Porsche, in other people's parking spots. Or in cordoned off parking areas. Not true, he says.

Mike is also a fearless do-it-yourself'er who tackles home projects ranging from leaky faucets, to developing apps for his swimming pool.

So again, there's few of us on the stage, but we are speaking for the staff who have embraced the ADVANCE Act with enthusiasm, passion.

And by next year, I hope that we will talk, we will be talking about all the staff having embraced the ADVANCE Act with passion, and enthusiasm. We're well on our way to doing that.

I'm going to start with Sabrina. Sabrina, couple of questions, and then I'll let you chat about what you feel is most important to bring up in this audience.

The mission statement is likely to become the most durable ADVANCE Act legacy for the NRC.

We have the enormous responsibility for putting together an implementation strategy that accomplishes what the Commission intended, and we need to make sure that each and every NRC staff can see themselves in it.

Please tell our audience how we are going about doing this very important task, and talk about our progress so far, and our plans for the near future.

MS. ATACK: Thank you, Mirela.

I'll try to give an elevator speech about our status and progress, and just mind that it might be a very tall building that we're in but I'll try to move along at a brisk pace.

So, we have a core team approach that we're using for the mission statement implementation guidance.

So, small team working really closely to develop the concept, and develop the guidance, and implementation strategy. And, we're pulsing the staff to get feedback.

We'll develop a product or an outline and then pulse the staff and iterate on that. So we're trying to keep modifying, giving feedback back to the organization, and then updating as we get more ideas and concepts to fill out the outline.

So, the guidance will start with a narrative that explains what the mission statement means.

And because there's a lot of new ideas and words, and concepts in the mission statement, we divided it -- decided it would be best to divide it into four separate elements so that we can describe them individually and really give a focus to the new words and ideas that are in the mission statement, and explain what they mean.

Within that body of the guidance, we're also going to provide practical examples of where we've seen staff have accomplishments or outcomes that are consistent with what we think successful implementation of the mission statement looks like.

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So these will be short stories if you will, that are included in the guidance. And the fun part about this, and this is a plug for our staff, is that with these success stories that model the behaviors we're really looking for in carrying out the mission, we will have sort of a byline that gives credit to the lead staff or staff members who have contributed, or really been the forward leaning individuals responsible for that success story.

So, we really want to make the staff see themselves in the guidance as Mirela said, and give credit to the people who are really the change leaders within the agency.

So following the body of the guidance, we're about half way through this elevator ride so just bear with me, please.

So following the body of the guidance, we'll have a series of appendices that are sort of the how-to. Mike loves these things, right?

They're the how-to in terms of implementing the mission statement guidance. So, these are going to give action-oriented statements to the staff that tell you what does good look like in terms of my behaviors, and my actions.

So, there will be one appendix, these are one page, easy to digest. One appendix is for all staff.

And then, there will be several other appendices that are targeted to different functional areas within the agency.

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Things like licensing, oversight, communications, mission support.

And one of the things I wanted to call attention to, and this is part of the continuous feedback we're receiving, is that we initially called that corporate support.

And, we got really great feedback that corporate support sometimes has a not-so-positive connotation, and it doesn't really give recognition of the importance of the activities that our offices who really make us able to carry out the mission, the contributions they make.

So, we changed that to mission support and I really appreciate that feedback.

So, after those appendices, now we work on implementation. And, we have a lot of ideas for the implementation that are coming together now.

Obviously we know we'll need to update some of our internal policies and guidance. And then the more interesting and exciting things kind of goes on a sliding scale, right?

We'll do some training and sessions with the staff to make sure they understand the mission statement implementation guidance, and understand how to carry it out.

And then, as you heard in some of the other discussions, you know, metrics, right? We're going to develop metrics and roll those out that will be transparent within the agency, and outside the agency so we can really measure

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accountability and see our progress. And, the staff will see the progress that they are contributing to, as well.

And in parallel with that, we'll be working on rolling our mission statement implementation guidance expectations into the performance management system, so that we can continue to give credit for the staff who are really carrying the mission forward, and leaning into the changes we need to make.

We have arrived at our floor. Thank you so much for riding with us. If you like what you heard, we're having a public meeting tomorrow afternoon at 1:00 o'clock in the commissioners' hearing room. You can hear so much more, and it's also available on Teams.

DR. GAVRILAS: Thank you, Sabrina.

Jack, some of the staff who stepped up in the most meaningful way since the ADVANCE Act was enacted, are inspectors.

Can you tell us about their ideas? How did they incorporate feedback from external stakeholders in what we are proposing?

What can we do in the implementation of the mission statement, to most directly address oversight staff?

MR. GEISNER: Yes, thanks.

First, I think the Commission did a great job when they built the mission, and the Chairman talked about it yesterday, think of those active verbs.

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Protect the health and safety of the public. There's your North Star. Inside of those are those active verbs now, which are advancing and enabling the use of nuclear power, and nuclear materials.

The how is in that reliable and efficiency. And, the inspectors, we want the inspectors to see that mission in what they do.

So as the, and we're still making the sausage mind you, because the papers are still being written.

The program Office of NMSS and NRR are leading it with the Regions participating, but a lot of ideas have come up to say why are we doing some things the way we're doing it?

For example, we do a lot of performance indicator verification from the licensees, who have a stellar record of submitting accurate information. Yet we do 100 percent verification.

The inspectors are saying, why are we spending time doing that? Do we need to do that?

Our operating license examiners are required periodically to write an exam to show that they know how to write the questions that they review for the licensees periodically.

And anyone that's taken the license exam knows that there is the right answer, which has to be right, and then you have answers which are colloquially known as distractors that have

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to be very good that they could almost be right, but are not right.

And so, license examiners are saying, why do we need to do that? We already review it 100 percent of the time.

So, these are the ideas that are coming up about what to inspect, and when. And I think that gives a feature of the emphasis that our inspectors have of getting this process to align with the mission.

The external stakeholders have a lot of comments addressing simplifying things, like our cross-cutting aspects. Do we want to keep them, or do we want to streamline them?

And, the one if we have time we can talk about how much time we continue to spend on very low safety-significant issues.

I think that some of that we've made progress on, but I think there's some ideas that we have to improve that.

So, I'll leave it at that for this question and come back if you want to talk about it.

DR. GAVRILAS: Thank you. Mike may beat you to it.

MR. GEISNER: Oh, he can do that.

DR. GAVRILAS: All right, let me go to John next.

Licensing has been an area targeted for improvement for a very long time. Over the past few years, we put in place all kinds of dashboards and other means of tracking progress.

Can you tell us how we are using data to inform process

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improvements? Could you also spend some time talking about what the staff is doing to expedite environmental reviews?

And the same question that I asked Jack, what can we do in the implementation of the mission statement, to most directly engage safety and environmental reviewers?

MR. LUBINSKI: Lot of questions there, Mirela. So let me go with your last question first, and I think it tiers off of what Jack said.

I think we really need to look from the licensing standpoint, whether it's the safety side, security side, or the environmental side and say, is what the licensee proposing, is it adequate?

Does it ensure safety? Does it ensure security? Is it safe for the environment? If the answer is yes, we need to get to yes in licensing.

We need to look at right now, some of our regulations. They may not be technology neutral, so we may have certain areas where the regulations may provide restrictions to getting to a yes.

But it's okay because of safety. We need to look at ways to get to a yes there and that may include looking at other avenues, such as exemptions as we continue to move forward. But again, keeping in mind is it safe.

When asking questions about whether it's safe or not,

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we need to look at the safety significance of our questions.

As Jack was saying in looking at areas during the inspection, we need to look at the same thing in licensing.

Do we really need this information to make a safety call? It's okay not to ask questions when you're going through a licensing review.

If the licensee has provided adequate information for you to make a safety decision, you can make your safety decision. You don't have to request additional information.

And, I think sometimes our mindset is if we don't find something, then we didn't do our job. And that's not always the case.

And, we have a good record that shows that many of our licensing actions have been issued without issuing requests for additional information.

Some of the data you talked about. We're looking at data right now. I was just briefed recently on a project where folks are looking at many of the business lines at NMSS and saying, how are we doing against the generic NEIMA metrics.

And, what we found is that in, for four of the business lines in my office, 95 percent of the actions were completed 28 percent earlier than the generic NEIMA metric.

That's a pretty big number. Ninety percent were completed 46 percent earlier.

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When we look at some of the new technologies out there, we had a licensee come in looking for increased enrichment at a fuel facility.

We were able to complete that first look at an increased enrichment at a fuel facility and do that 46 percent faster than the generic NEIMA metrics, still meeting the licensee's need.

And got the second one out at 15 percent faster.

But the message that was given by folks who briefed me on the project were, that's where we are today but we're setting a stretch goal to go further.

That's, this, we want to make that the new baseline as we continue to move forward but have a stretch goal.

How do we get there? Some of the ideas are streamlining the paperwork at the end. How much do we really need to put in our safety evaluations when we spend time reporting out on our safety evaluations?

We really need to look instead of saying what can we cut out it, start with the baseline of why do we even need a safety evaluation?

Many things in NMSS don't require safety evaluations. Many licensing actions, but they add value.

They add value from the standpoint of providing what your reason was for your decision in going forward.

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But if we start with the beginning of the why are we doing it, I think it really helps us to frame it to the right level and put the correct information as we go forward.

A lot of these same areas apply in the environmental as well. But if I were to really look at the staff and what we're trying to do in that area, I think the biggest items I've seen are the ADVANCE Act and the Fiscal Responsibility Act, that have set standards for changes in the environmental area.

The staff, many of the ideas that were in the Fiscal Responsibility Act, are ideas that our staff has embraced for years.

The staff has provided recommendations to the Commission, and when we get the Commission decisions on that, we'll be able to implement some of those changes.

In the interim, we're continuing to look at other areas for improvement where we're using generic environmental impact statements.

We're estimating that when we have approval of one for the advanced reactors, that could save us about 40 percent in our resources going forward.

We've already implemented issuing environmental assessments instead of EISes for certain licensing actions. That has saved us money, as well.

We're looking at streamlined environmental assessments

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for microreactors as we continue to move forward, which could have an order of magnitude savings as you continue to move forward in that area.

We've already implemented some of the Fiscal Responsibility Act items, as well as shortening many of our review times, as well as the documentation for environmental reviews.

DR. GAVRILAS: Thank you, John.

Owen, you bring invaluable perspective from both your varied background and as the most recent addition to the NRC=s senior leadership team.

How do you see the new mission statement and other ADVANCE Act activities, influencing the agency's budget formulation and execution?

I've got more. In more general terms, what do you anticipate with regards to the closer integration of mission direct, and mission support activities?

And, is our mission support, is our mission statement implementation strategy reaching our mission support staff?

MR. BARWELL: Okay, thank you, thank you, Mirela, and as it's been noted, this is my first RIC so pleasure to be here.

I've enjoyed interacting with our industry representatives here, and for those that have paid your bills on time, thank you very much.

We may need the money coming up as we're keeping a

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close eye on what's happening at Capitol Hill.

Also welcome to our international partners, and also our staff. It really is a treat to be on the panel here, to represent the office of the CFO and our team here.

And I think at a high level, Mirela, thank you for the invitation to join the panel. I think that does express the working relationship between the Office of the EDO, and the Office of the CFO since I've joined the agency about 9 months ago.

I think what I'll start with is the integration of mission, and mission support. Now, I draw upon some time at NASA way back when, when I had the opportunity to meet a blue suited astronaut.

And, it was at Johnson Space Center, having a conversation with the astronaut and he asked, so what do you do here at NASA?

And I said well, we're implementing financial systems, changing the way that we do business, reorganizing and restructuring.

And, as I was delivering my explanation of what I did for a living, he said Owen, I've got to stop you. I have no idea what you do. I am an astronaut scientist.

But I think I need to thank you because I think what you do is get me the money so I can fly the space shuttle, and that's cool.

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I said you're absolutely right. And I don't mind working pretty hard here to get money to enable you to fly the space shuttle, because that's cool.

So, the relationship at NASA between mission and mission support, was very, very tight. And there's actually a very serious note to that with, on the aspect of safety.

The astronauts wanted to believe that they could fly their mission, and return to Earth safely. And they relied very heavily on people on the ground to make all of that stuff happen.

Recently, I had the chance at Jack's invitation, to visit Region III and have a tour at a nuclear power plant.

And again, a more local story around the relationship between mission and mission support, is something I experienced during that visit.

So I had the chance to tour the plant, the LaSalle Plant, and spend some time with the resident inspectors.

And, Jan and Jamie did a terrific job of showing me the day in/day out of their job. And what that helps me do is translate, this is where the work of the agency is being performed.

When we're back in North Bethesda sitting in our office defining financial policies around travel, or timekeeping, there's a very real impact of those things that are happening here, and what's happening out in the workplace.

And we need to be really mindful of as mission support

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agents, really helping the mission of the agency.

Equally, folks on the mission side need to appreciate and respect what work is being done by mission support.

So not long after I joined the agency, we were experiencing a number of weather conditions that left our employees stranded in some places dealing with storms. Not least of which was Chair Hanson and his staff.

So imagine I'm only here a few days, a few couple weeks or so, and the chair of the NRC gets stranded overseas somewhere.

So, my team scrambled. We were able to get him and his team back to the U.S. safely but I broke out in a cold sweat. We've got other people out there, too, right?

So, visiting with my team, Justin, Marisa, and Patty, where are we with all of our people?

And they said, we got this, playing to my audience. We got this. We have been in touch with every one of our employees that is traveling, that may be impacted by storms and they're on their way home.

So, we were able to bring our boys home. So the relationship between mission and mission support, is very symbiotic.

And it's based on performance and mutual respect, and an understanding that both of those sides of the organization contribute to the very important mission that we're executing.

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And on the budget side, I think the Act was passed just a couple of weeks or so before I started at the agency.

But we nevertheless, hit the ground running. And Brooke and her OGC team, as well as Joel and some of the folks in my organization, had already prepared analyses of this is what the Act means to us as an agency, but also to us financially.

And so, we were able to very quickly get up to speed in several areas. First of all, we ran a drill on our FY 26 budget request.

We bought a little bit of time with OMB. Let's really understand the financial implications of the Act.

We also if you're interested in our fees for dealing with advanced reactors for example, we were able to introduce the new fee rule for in this fiscal year, so we're ready for implementing a new rate structure on the first of October next year.

Which has very positive implications for potential applicants in paying a lower fee, and not having to deal with some potentially challenging cash flow challenges, too.

And then finally, we were able to, in the spirit of the Act, introduce some good budgeting practices in advance of our FY 27 budget.

So, multi-year planning year for corporate and mission support activities; prioritizing our work in potentially a

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constrained budget environment.

We are actually producing a budget and our intent is to actually show the fees that are derived from that budget, something that hasn't been done before.

And again, within the spirit and direction of the Act, keep our mission support costs below the cap that's been enacted.

So, it's been a terrific 9 months, Mirela, again being able to advocate for mission support, and appreciate the mission work that we do.

And, translate what has been enacted and directed by the Congress, to meaningful work here at the agency.

DR. GAVRILAS: Thank you.

Mike, again, thanks for your leadership. From your vantage point, you have seen a lot of the agency embrace the opportunities created by the ADVANCE Act.

Can you give us overall status, and tell the audience about how some of the most innovative suggestions, about some of the most innovative suggestions that you received from either internal or external stakeholder?

And one more thing, you get to add anything else you want to share with us with regards to effecting cultural change that especially the change that we will need to thrive in light of the workload that we're anticipating in the future.

MR. KING: Thanks, Mirela, and welcome everybody.

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I'm excited to report that we're making strong early progress. We've got a long way to go, but so far of the 36 different activities that we're tracking discretely, or individually, we've accomplished eight of them.

But one of the things I reinforced recently at the Commission meeting we had on the ADVANCE Act, is issuing these reports is just an interim milestone.

What's most important is that we follow through on what we commit to, to do in exploring these reports.

But I think, I'm very optimistic that we've made some good early progress. Not only with the things that Congress directed us to do explicitly in the Act, but with activities that are consistent with the spirit of the Act.

We've gone beyond just words on the page in the Act in several areas, and I think will yield dividends in the long run for us as an agency.

Some of the things that are impressing me the most in terms of innovative ideas that have come through, have come not only from staff internally to the agency.

I reported last week we had over 200 ideas that we've received through our own solicitation of ideas from the staff and across the agency.

But we've also through the public interactions we've had through our public website, and many of you listening in have

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contributed ideas.

We have over 20 ideas that were submitted through our website. We received a number of letters with very thoughtful analysis and ideas for things we could do.

Things like reinforcing the importance of not only risk informed but being performance based in our approach, was a healthy reminder.

Having us look at things in a way that's not overly constraining in terms of technology.

And we've done that in some of our reports. We've challenged ourselves to open up the aperture, to not be too constraining in that area.

Some of the more innovative ideas and not surprising, are in the use of AI. And us looking for ways to automate our internal processes from our mission support activities.

There's a lot of opportunity for us to be more efficient in the way we operate, leveraging AI in those areas.

Leveraging AI to automate the internal processing and initial analysis of the license amendment requests as they come in. And, to help out on the inspection front with the use of AI.

Some of the things that -- one of the most impressive ideas that left an impact on me, was a couple of inspection staff or in-house headquarters staff approached me and said hey, you know what, we had an idea. It was a big idea, and we don't feel

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like we're getting enough traction for consideration of this idea.

And, the idea was something that Jack referred to which was today across the operating fleet, operators submit a lot of detailed information to the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations.

They're already collecting that information. Why don't we take a first principles approach, see if we can use any of that information to develop more robust performance indicators. Objective performance indicators.

And if we do that, maybe there's a way we can leverage that objective data and do less baseline inspection. So we achieve safety and the reasonable assurance standard, but do it with less resources.

And, that was a very bold approach and we ended up deciding that that's one of the areas we want to pursue in the near term.

In terms of culture, I think one of the biggest things we can do is, and I appreciate the commission's collegial approach for developing the mission statement.

In our efforts that Sabrina's working on with following that through, and figuring out how we can most effectively implement that, I think has the potential biggest impact on culture.

Everything that we can do now to make the vision and the future of the agency and what good looks like, as crystal clear

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to everybody at the agency, and how they fit into that, will help us achieve the culture we desire.

Holding ourselves accountable through developing very objective metrics. Not just metrics that we know we can always achieve, but be bold.

Develop metrics that are going to be hard to achieve. Hold ourselves to that. Be publicly accountable. Have those publicly available.

So, we're doing things like if we have an expectation for how long we should take to resolve a low-level safety issue, be clear what that expectation is.

How many days is that? How many hours is that? Let's measure our progress against that.

And if we have an expectation for how long it will take for us to resolve inspection issues, let's be clear with that. Measure it, and same with licensing.

So, those sorts of things I think, setting a clear goal, what good looks like, and measuring ourselves to it, and breaking down barriers to the staff to do that, helps achieve the culture we want.

DR. GAVRILAS: Okay, so I see -- thank you, Mike.

I see we have about 5 minutes left and I really, really want to get to this question. It's a sort of test for all of us.

Can you provide an example on how do we get to yes on

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licensing, if there is a prescriptive requirement in the Regulation that may not be safety significant, but it is still a requirement, and the sample in the inspection procedure.

And, I'm not going to read the last part of the question because that kind of ties our hands.

So, I do think these are exactly the kind of questions that we need to be able to address with our staff, to basically eliminate obstacles that may stand in the way of us being a risk-informed decision maker.

Okay, Jack and John.

MR. LUBINSKI: I'll start on the licensing side. I think the issue is we said is if there's a prescriptive regulation, we're going to have to address it and why we're not making the licensee meet it.

And, if there's a safety reason that we're saying that it's still safe even without meeting that, that provides a justification.

Almost every regulation allows for us to issue exemptions. It could be either the licensee requesting it, or self-initiate it.

We would evaluate it in accordance with that process, and make our final determination.

I think the biggest part and Mike and I have talked about this a number of times, and he said this and I'm going to

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attribute it to him is, as we're talking to the staff about this, it's making sure that they know we're behind them on this. That we endorse these ideas.

And in fact, within the last couple months, someone specifically asked me the question when I said is it safe and they said yes, but it doesn't meet our guidance. It does not meet the prescriptive part of the Regulation.

And they said, can I still approve it and I said yes. And they looked at me very funny and said, are you sure? And, I said yes. We can do that.

So, the concern is looking at it to say when I go down the road, what is the justification?

It's easy to get the justification to say it met the Reg, it met the guidance. Now they have to make that independent decision and we need to stand behind them in that decisionmaking.

MR. GEISNER: Yes, and if the licensing piece, there's no exemption out there and an inspector is out there, we expect the inspector to look at that.

If there's an enforcement discretion that's needed, we could use it, otherwise, you need to cite the violation and take action to make the correction that's needed.

That's how the rule is built. But there are options we have to move forward, to correct the item in the future.

DR. GAVRILAS: I'm going to do the next one by a show

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of hands from all of us. Does the NRC culture need to change to enable faster reactor licensing?

(Show of hands.)

DR. GAVRILAS: It's unanimous.

Now, how it needs to change we're still working on.

Okay, and I'm going to do one because I wanted us to have a panel discussion, but I want to leave the audience with this last thought that each of us are working within our span of control, to mold our environment.

So, the last question very quickly, we only have 2 minutes left and my boss will not forgive me if I bite into his session.

How are we creating the leaders of the future? Very quickly.

Sabrina.

MS. ATACK: I would say we're throwing them in the deep end of the pool but with a life preserver, right?

So, I had a branch chief start December 16. I had her briefing a member of the Commission two weeks later, and that didn't include the two federal holidays that were in between that, because she had the right skills and the right knowledge to do it.

MR. GEISNER: We build it by focusing on our values. Being respectful, being compassionate, and the extraordinary people that work for us, acknowledging their great sacrifices.

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MR. KING: We build it by leading by example ourselves. Making the hard decisions consistent with our values, and supporting them to make similar decisions.

MR. LUBINSKI: From a knowledge management standpoint, it's explaining the why behind our history and what we've done.

And why we're making our decisions, so that they can understand the basis and allow them to communicate as they continue to lead, why they're making the decisions they're making.

MR. BARWELL: I didn't raise my hand on the last question. Let me explain why.

I have a very simple definition of culture, and that is the way things are done around here, which makes cultures very hard to establish and even harder to change.

And so, I don't necessarily think we need to change entirely but it's definitely an evolution of our culture.

So that's why I was included as unanimous, but I didn't raise my hand.

DR. GAVRILAS: Okay, so I'll take him as an abstention. An abstention, that's the best.

MR. BARWELL: And, that's my demonstration of leadership right there.

DR. GAVRILAS: Okay, wonderful.

So, I'm going, I am going to end with what they said. Thank you all very much for allowing us to chat with you.

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If you have something that you want to share with us with regard to the implementation of our new mission statement, please tap us all on the shoulder. We can't wait to hear from you.

Thank you very much, and thank you all.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 11:14 a.m.)

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