

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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37TH ANNUAL REGULATORY INFORMATION CONFERENCE

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COMMISSIONER MARZANO 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 9:00 a.m.
EDT.

SPEAKERS

THE HONORABLE MATTHEW J. MARZANO, Commissioner, NRC

LAURA DUDES, Acting Director, NRR

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

9:02 a.m.

MS. DUDES: Thank you. Good morning, everyone.

Commissioner Crowell, thank you so much. What a great session, and thank you for bringing those gems to us. I really appreciate it. As a member of the staff, just listening to former Chairman Burns and Commissioner Ostendorff, who was there for a lot of challenges for us, it meant a lot.

And I have to say, that is the first time, Commissioner Ostendorff, that we didn't get a sea story. Every single time we had a sea story. No, that was truly wonderful, and we really appreciate that perspective.

So last but absolutely not least, it is my honor to present and to introduce our final commissioner's remarks. And before I read his bio, there's something in his bio.

As a regional administrator, I do a lot of operator licensing dinners. And one thing that I say as I'm giving the speech before we give out the certificates, is the importance of three words. And these three words carry so much about a person, their character, what they've dedicated themselves to do. And that is licensed reactor operator.

In our industry here in the nuclear world, you'll get a biography of someone, and it will say maybe what they're doing now and where they went to school. But at the bottom, if it says

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licensed reactor operator, that means something to all of us. It means that someone dedicated a lot of time to know what one valve in the plant does. And I'm going to tell you, they probably got asked that on the exam during their in-plant JPM.

So without any further, I am pleased to introduce the Honorable Matthew Marzano, who was appointed by President Joe Biden and sworn in as a Commissioner of the United States Regulatory Commission on January 6, 2025, to a term ending June 30, 2028.

Commissioner Marzano has served as staff on the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works and brings over a decade of experience in the nuclear industry to the Commission, including his time as a licensed reactor operator.

Welcome, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER MARZANO: Well, thank you very much, Laura. I appreciate that introduction, very kind.

Good morning, Regulatory Information Conference. One advantage of being the last commissioner to provide remarks is I can make this really simple. Ditto, God bless, and good night.

No, no, no, that would be letting you all off a little too easy, so let's begin. Well, by now we've heard four incredible speeches by my fellow commissioners, each filled with passion, wisdom, and a little deja vu. But before I dive in, I want to keep things lively with a little game.

So by now I'm sure you've heard these terms dozens of

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times already, and as a matter of fact you'll probably hear me say ADVANCE Act at least a dozen more over the next 20 minutes. Okay, so the game, which some of you may be familiar within a different setting, is to take a sip of your caffeinated beverage of choice each time you hear one of these buzzwords.

So I hope your cups are full now, and by the end you should all be fully caffeinated and jazzed for the rest of the day's session. Kidding, of course, please don't over-caffeinate yourselves too much.

Anyways, but seriously, I'd sincerely like to thank, say thank you to my fellow commissioners and welcome all of our distinguished guests, former commissioners, and NRC staff, our international guests, and everyone joining here in this room or online.

I hope you have all been enjoying the RIC thus far, and I hope that you've all taken advantage of the technical sessions and opportunities to network with your fellow nuclear professionals, building new relationships and fostering longstanding ones.

I'm honored to be here today with an opportunity to introduce myself and share my perspectives and my thoughts about the future of nuclear and the role of the NRC. First, a little backstory, or a little of my backstory and how I came to stand before you all today.

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I was born and raised in the Chicago area, my parents with different religious backgrounds. Looking back, I credit this spiritual duality as having a tremendous influence on the values that I hold sacred. Despite different canons and traditions, I learned early not to focus on the differences, but rather the common set of principles that reveal our shared humanity.

Eventually, I realized that one particular teaching, which may come as no surprise, encapsulates these common principles and transcends faith and belief systems. Simply: do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

No matter the religion, culture, philosophy, this concept provides a foundation for the expression of empathy, compassion, understanding, and respect, the very core values that have guided me throughout my life and that will guide me as a commissioner.

My interest in the sciences began very early in my life. I recall long conversations about physics and the way the world works with my grandfather, Ronald Waxman, seen here in his younger days, an electrical engineer who could fix anything.

Being all of ten years old, much of the knowledge he tried to impart flew well above my comprehension, but nonetheless inspired me to pursue scientific study with a passionate curiosity for finding things out. So he instilled in me what I will refer to as the Feynman ethos, a belief characterized by scientific

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integrity, curiosity, and an inherent skepticism and questioning attitude.

And it is certainly not lost on me that my grandfather just so happened to have led the engineering team that developed early arcade games such as Q*bert, and I promise I am not joking, Reactor, a game where the object is literally to cool down the core of a nuclear reactor.

It is because of my grandfather's influence that I pursued a degree in nuclear engineering. Through my studies I learned then, as I believe now, that safely managed nuclear power has an important role to play in the world's energy mix.

After completing my degree, I joined the Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory, where I trained alongside the Navy's finest sailors to become a civilian instructor, engineer, and operator, implementing the Navy's training mission. Executing that mission required me to internalize and uphold the rigorous safety-focused standards that define operational excellence.

I later found that the same safety principles underpinning the Navy's nuclear program carried over in the commercial nuclear industry. As a senior reactor operator candidate at the V.C. Summer construction project in South Carolina, I observed the complexities of managing first-of-a-kind nuclear projects and the importance of proactive engagement between NRC and licensees.

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I witnessed how early engagement can drive timely resolution of novel regulatory issues that arise during the construction and design phase of new reactors.

I then earned my SRO license at Braidwood Generating Station in Illinois. An SRO license carries with it the responsibility to protect public health and safety and environment while navigating the intricate relationship between nuclear power operations and regulatory compliance.

My time working in the nuclear industry coincided with the premature closure of several nuclear power plants and the threat of closure of many others. Those developments, together with a longstanding interest in politics and government, inspired me to apply for the American Nuclear Society's congressional fellowship program.

I joined the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, with oversight of the NRC, and sought to learn from experts in energy and climate policy while advancing the committee's priorities on nuclear safety matters. This included advising the chairman on what would become the ADVANCE Act, working both across the aisle and with our House colleagues to reach agreement on differing views.

This collaboration led to the final passage of the ADVANCE Act in July of last year, one of the most significant pieces of energy legislation in recent history.

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So I wanted to share my backstory to give you a sense of my values and the experiences that shaped who I am and how I think about my role as a commissioner. It is also not lost on me that I've joined the Commission at an inflection point. Although the NRC has encountered similar moments in the agency's history, the issues we face today are uniquely complex and will test our response to a rapidly changing world.

Earlier this year, we celebrated the NRC's 50th anniversary. And as I was thinking about the storied 50 years of the NRC, it made me wonder what else has aged well at 50 and stood the test of time. Yes, the idea for Post-it notes, developed 50 years ago today, led to an extraordinarily versatile product that remains ubiquitous, even with the shift to a more digital world.

We use Post-it notes for so many things. I don't know how I would stay organized without them. And the uses for this irreplaceable tool are nearly endless.

Yes, the brainchild of Erno Rubik, this nifty little box revolutionized puzzling entertainment when it hit the shelves in the mid-1970s, challenging minds worldwide with its colorful complexity.

To put this into perspective, if one had a standard-size Rubik's cube, each permutation to solve the puzzle could cover the Earth's surface 275 times. Or if stacked end to end, would measure a distance of 261 light years.

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Although there are a significant number of ways to solve the Rubik's cube, several solutions do so in well under 100 moves. And side note, the current record stands at 3.13 seconds. That's very impressive. Meanwhile, I've had one going at home for the past 3.13 years that I have not finished, so TBD on that.

Perhaps some of you may be familiar with or have played Dungeons & Dragons. But for those of you who don't know, D&D is a game where players venture into mystical realms for the uses of storytelling, battle imaginary creatures, and gather knowledge to solve problems.

Dungeons & Dragons also recently turned the big 5-0. Yet, the game play continues to evolve, supported by modern technology, introducing the game to new audiences.

This timeless classic is one of the funniest and most quotable movies ever made. Even after 50 years, many still debate how coconuts migrate, and it is common knowledge that a swallow must beat its wings 43 times every second to maintain its airspeed velocity.

So, why do I bring all of these up? Yes, maybe to get a chuckle or two, but in all seriousness, these ideas have staying power, remaining relevant across our culture across generations. And so has the NRC in its role as the international gold standard for independent civil nuclear safety regulation.

So as the theme of the RIC lays bare, what will it

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take for the NRC to sustain its reputation for regulatory excellence over the next 50 years? From the examples I just highlighted, I believe we can glean a few things.

First, we have to be versatile and flexible, much like the ever-present Post-it note. Today, the nuclear landscape is rapidly evolving, more so by the day. The NRC has no choice but to adopt an agile, mission-focused culture prepared to pivot as necessary. We must embrace novel solutions to problems and identify issues early.

Second, the problems we face looking into the future are multi-faceted and complex. As with the Rubik's cube, there is more than one way to solve a given problem. But finding the most effective and efficient way is key. As an agency, we must continue to lean in to be risk-informed and to accept reasonable risks where appropriate.

Third, like the game Dungeons & Dragons, the agency must be curious and imaginative as we enter a new paradigm for the generation of nuclear energy and applications of radioactive materials. This is the opportunity for us, as the NRC, to write our story and choose our path to success. Each member of the NRC staff has a role to play in shaping that narrative.

Lastly, you may be asking yourselves, well, what can we learn from Monty Python. Well, that as you move forward in the world, make sure that you find opportunities for laughter and joy

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no matter what the circumstances.

So at this critical moment, marked not only by the NRC's 50th anniversary, but also by staggering projections for growth in nuclear energy domestically and abroad, and on a scale rivaled only by the dawn of the atomic age and the Atoms for Peace campaign of the 1950s, the NRC must take stock of where we have been and where we are going.

Now is the time for us to define our own legacy to write our story with ownership and intention so that it isn't written for us. The NRC has faced similar tests in the past. Looking back on our history, there have been a number of existential moments that have shaped the agency's trajectory.

Three Mile Island was the most serious nuclear accident in U.S. history, and brought about sweeping changes to our regulatory oversight, including our approach to emergency response planning, operator training, human factors engineering, and many others areas of nuclear power plant operation. The lessons learned from that event significantly enhance reactor operations in the United States, anchored by a culture of safety and accountability.

In 1998, Senator Pete Domenici, then chairman of the NRC's appropriations subcommittee, concluded that the NRC had crossed the line from regulating reactor safety and into excessive oversight of our licensees. He came to the agency with an

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ultimatum: become more risk-informed, or face significant cuts to the agency's budget and staff.

This became known as the agency's near-death experience, but introduced risk-informed regulation and birthed the reactor oversight process, or ROP. Fortunately, Chairman Shirley Jackson had already taken time and action to position the agency to be risk-informed before that ultimatum, an opportunity favors the prepared moment.

Lastly, the Fukushima event, which happened 14 years ago yesterday, drastically shifted the global outlook for nuclear energy. While the lessons learned from that event led to the improved resilience of the nation's power plants, the aftermath contributed to the collapse of the first nuclear renaissance. The NRC has only recently recovered from the impacts of this chain of events, but continues to feel its effects even today.

The NRC's response to each of these moments in our history reflects the agency's steadfast commitment to safety and continuous improvement while reinforcing the NRC's reputation as the gold standard in nuclear regulation. However, sustaining NRC's position as a global leader means we cannot simply continue with business as usual, or wait for the next existential moment that demands a response.

In my view, our story of success will be written by leaning into three things. First, readying the agency to be more

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proactive and agile as we face a new wave of technologies.

Second, doubling down on our efforts to engage the public by meeting them where they are and building an understanding of NRC's role in the deployment of nuclear technologies. And third, focusing on the heart of all of the NRC's achievements, its people.

I believe that these priorities provide strategic direction to the NRC to evolve its culture to be more proactive, forward-thinking, and adaptable, rebuilding the agency into a regulator that doesn't just respond to change but anticipates it. By embracing this mindset, we can not only meet today's challenges, but build resilience for any that arise in the next 50 years and beyond.

I didn't develop these priorities in isolation. Rather, they are the result of years of my observations and align with the work of Congress to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the NRC.

For the remainder of my time, I'll offer my thoughts on how to write this story of success and achieve these goals. But I'll begin with a short detour about the direction we've been given over the past few years. In particular, and apologies for my use of acronyms in advance, NEIMA, I want to briefly focus on certain aspects of NEIMA, NEICA, and most recently the ADVANCE Act.

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The Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act of 2019, or NEIMA, directed the NRC to develop a new licensing framework for advanced reactors, known as Part 53. While this effort is proceeding apace, it is projected to be completed ahead of the deadline.

It is imperative that the new licensing framework delivers a flexible and simplified licensing pathway grounded by an appropriate focus on safety and risk. Even more important, the final rule must be usable to support the new technologies and deployment models of future applicants.

Meanwhile, we need to be just as flexible and efficient under our existing regulatory structure to license new designs and capture those lessons learned to foster continuous improvement.

Prior to NEIMA, Congress recognized the need to support the deployment of advanced reactors. The Nuclear Energy Innovation Capabilities Act of 2017, or NEICA, set out to encourage next generation nuclear innovation.

Under NEICA, the NRC and the Department of Energy entered into a partnership to further coordinate advanced reactor research and demonstration. These collaborative efforts have already yielded positive outcomes for both NRC and DOE.

Expanding this collaboration, with appropriate guardrails to ensure independence, will not only help the NRC to better anticipate novel safety issues, but also provide insights

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to researchers and developers that can help accelerate deployment.

Congress's efforts over the decades to ensure that the United States has the tools it needs to deploy the next generation of nuclear energy and to reestablish U.S. global leadership in civilian nuclear technology culminated in the passage of the bipartisan Accelerating Deployment of Versatile, Advanced Nuclear for Clean Energy Act, or the ADVANCE Act.

As my old boss, Senator Tom Carper of Delaware, would say, we have to find out what works and do more of that. And somewhere right now Senator Capito's ears are ringing because I said that. In light of this tradition, the ADVANCE Act builds on several efforts initiated under NEICA and NEIMA.

First, among the changes that NEIMA made to the NRC's budget, I want to highlight the classification of certain NRC activities as excluded from fee-recovery. This includes costs related to the development of Part 53.

The ADVANCE Act added several activities to this list, like removing a portion of the costs associated with advance reactor application and pre-application reviews.

I want to pause here and point out that excluding certain activities from fee recovery has the practical effect of increasing public investment in the NRC's work. In essence, I believe this strategy represents a recognition by Congress that the NRC's efforts deliver broader public benefits to society,

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especially those that support innovation and progress.

Direct funding can also help reduce barriers for advanced reactor developers to engage with the NRC by better allocating resources to these efforts. In a similar way, the NRC's ability to anticipate the commercial readiness of novel technologies can help us grow our technical capacity and inform our strategic planning.

Relatedly, the ADVANCE Act broadened the scope of cooperation between the NRC and DOE to advance nuclear fuel development, building on the success of the program initiated under NEICA.

Integrating the NRC into the R&D process as appropriate can accelerate fuel qualification and deliver safer and more efficient fuels for existing and advanced reactors. And although the provisions I just described made targeted expansions to the initiatives started under NEIMA and NEICA, the ADVANCE Act has set the NRC on a bold new path, inspiring a renewed commitment to our mission and the future.

Speaking of our mission, in January the Commission issued the NRC's updated mission statement, as directed by the ADVANCE Act. By now you've read or heard these words several times, so I'll spare you another reading.

But I do want to draw your attention to the statutory text of the ADVANCE Act, on the right side of the screen, that

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required the NRC to update its mission statement consistent with the policy of the Atomic Energy Act and the Energy Reorganization Act, and to include that regulation be conducted in a manner that is efficient and does not unnecessarily limit the benefits of radioactive materials and nuclear energy technology to society.

This language has reinvigorated a discussion that reveals somewhat of an inherent tension between the Atomic Energy Act and the Energy Reorganization Act. The question is how does the NRC retain its independent non-promotional role as a safety regulator that does not unnecessarily limit the benefits of nuclear energy technology.

The question of balance has been a topic of conversation since NRC's founding. The architects of the Energy Reorganization Act were clear that, quote, The Commission should not be insensitive to the national need for the development of a strong, reliable nuclear industry in the United States, unquote.

Consideration for the need for power, economic benefits and the establishment of public trust were factors expressed to be part of the decision-making of the new agency.

All of this is to say that the ADVANCE Act does not grant new authorities to consider societal benefits of nuclear technologies, but rather reinforces that this has been a part of the NRC's foundational statutes all along.

And I believe it is worth reiterating that this

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provision does not alter the agency's core safety mission and security mandate under law. Nor should we stray from our non-promotional role. After all, it is this model of regulation that has been copied worldwide and bolsters the NRC's global reputation.

But clearly there is latitude for the NRC to consider the societal benefits of nuclear technologies in ways that align with our vision and values.

Returning to the question I posed earlier, while the updated mission statement provides strategic direction, it leaves unanswered the question of how the NRC does not unnecessarily limit the societal benefits of nuclear technologies without compromising safety. And that question cannot be answered without considering the other component of the required mission statement update.

Efficiency is not new to the NRC. Since 1991, the principles of good regulation have shaped the NRC's values and guided the agency's decision-making and the individual behavior of NRC staff. In the ADVANCE Act, Congress elevated efficiency as the operative framework that we should further apply in our approach to licensing, regulation, and oversight.

The efficiency principle states in part that the American taxpayer, the rate-paying consumer, and licensees are all entitled to the best possible management and administration of regulatory activities. More pointedly, the ADVANCE Act directs the NRC to improve our responsiveness to all stakeholders impacted

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by the NRC's decision-making.

The efficiency principle also clarifies how to put its intent into practice. Fundamentally, efficiency as applied to the NRC's regulatory activities means alignment with the degree of risk reduction they achieve. But efficiency is more than finding a balanced and reasoned approach to evaluating safety in the NRC's decision-making.

Efficiency also calls upon the NRC to establish means to evaluate and continually upgrade its regulatory capabilities. That is why, as one of my priorities, I've emphasized cultivating a forward-looking approach supported by a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.

Truly embracing efficiency means analyzing the organization from the top down, reevaluating its structure and processes to ensure alignment with our mission. It also means that we must adopt a strategic vision of the evolving technology landscape and shed our reactive posture.

We must also leverage cooperative efforts domestically and abroad aimed at licensing new technologies. And we must incorporate the state of the art into our own operations to improve our capabilities, which includes expanding our use and understanding of how licensees will use artificial intelligence.

It is my hope that these efforts drive the agency to proactively seek ways to align our regulatory approaches with the

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new paradigm of rapidly advancing technologies, and to proactively seek ways to shape our own narrative so it is not shaped for us.

I believe that the only way the NRC can accomplish this is with the trust and confidence of the public we serve. The continued use of radioactive materials for the benefit of society requires the NRC to accept its share for the responsibility to maintain this social license.

That is why my second priority is focused on building public trust and confidence in the NRC's decision-making, which will foster greater acceptance of nuclear technologies. Developing trust starts with meeting people where they are. That also means removing barriers to communication, using plain language to describe how the NRC's actions impact communities.

Early and proactive public engagement can benefit nuclear projects and host communities by building that trust and addressing issues before they escalate, leading to better outcomes that align with community needs. This is especially true as the number of communities that are new to nuclear is expected to grow in the coming years.

It will be imperative to engage with these communities to help them understand how the NRC works to protect the public health and safety, and that our mission is critically important to the nation and to the world.

So, I've spoken at length about how I think the NRC

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can begin to write our story in the next 50 years. Yet, I'll note that none of this happens without NRC's people.

From the control room to the Commission hearing room, I've witnessed the pressure and expectations the NRC faces from external stakeholders. However, just as important are the perspectives and experiences of the internal stakeholders, the NRC staff.

It's the people here at this agency, the lifeblood of this organization, who dedicate their professional lives to public service, and when required, sacrifice their personal time to protect public health and safety.

Around the time that I was finishing up my degree in nuclear engineering, the NRC was rated as one of the top places to work in the government. Perhaps not surprisingly, this coincided with a renewed interest in nuclear energy and corresponding growth at the agency.

But, like I mentioned earlier, projections for new nuclear development reversed course just as the NRC was positioned to respond to a growing workload. We face similar circumstances today.

My goal and my third priority is ensuring that we learn from our recent past and adopt a smart growth strategy that focuses on having the right resources in the right place at the right time. This strategy must also cultivate a renewed sense of optimism for

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the future and to return the NRC to one of the best places to work in the federal government.

Improving employee sentiment and job satisfaction is fundamental to accomplishing our mission and direction from Congress. In my view, the key will be for the agency leadership, including us on the Commission, to invest in our people and arm them with the resources they need to feel supported. That requires not just listening to people's concerns, but following up with action.

This is a tumultuous time for the federal workforce. But even in the face of these external challenges, I remain committed to and focused on building and maintaining a competent, well-trained workforce that can meet expected demands.

So now is the time to redouble our efforts to ensure that the NRC has the qualified and specialized staff we need to fulfill our mission. That is why leveraging our new workforce authorities under the ADVANCE Act is so crucial.

But no matter how long you've been here, be it ten months, ten years, or beyond, and no matter what you work on, be it operating reactors, new reactors, materials, or in corporate support, you will be the authors of our story for the next 50 years.

So, I want to take this moment to express my sincere gratitude to each of you. Your resilience, dedication, and

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commitment do not go unnoticed. You are the backbone of this agency. And I am truly honored to work alongside such a talented and passionate group.

Thank you for all that you do. Your contributions are invaluable, and I am confident that together, we will achieve great things and make our NRC community a better place for all.

Before I close, I want to sincerely thank my incredible staff. Their support and dedication have made my transition smooth and my first 60 days both productive and meaningful. I am truly grateful for them.

So thank you to Patty Jimenez, Steven Lynch, Hector Rodriguez, Rebecca Susko, and Shakur Walker.

In closing, I hope I was able to leave you all with a glimpse of my story, how it fits into the NRC's story, and the path I believe we should take to achieve success.

And with that, I look forward to writing our next chapter, and I hope you will join me as we set our sights on the next 50 years. Thank you.

MS. DUDES: Do you need a minute?

COMMISSIONER MARZANO: I think I'm ready to jump right in.

MS. DUDES: All right, well great. I have a lot of questions for you.

So here we go, we're going to start with the first

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one. As the newest member of the Commission, can you tell us a bit about your first 60 days? How have they been and what stood out the most?

COMMISSIONER MARZANO: Yes. Well, in my first week, we had a snowstorm that delayed my swearing-in ceremony, and then a Commission meeting, the 50th anniversary celebration of the NRC. So I was really trying to pack it in, there was a lot of things going on in my first week.

But you know, one thing that was readily apparent to me was how welcoming the staff, the Commission, everybody in this agency was. That has honestly been such a blessing to me and has made me feel incredibly welcome.

And I'll note going back to that 50th anniversary celebration, we received, you know, they had a video that played that showed kind of appreciation from across the world for the NRC reaching this milestone. And you know, sometimes you tend to say things like the NRC is the gold standard, etc. And sometimes those words are spoken.

But I think that was one of the moments for me that really had that sentiment sink in, into you know, hearing it from our international counterparts of how much they appreciate the work that we do and our partnership. And so that was very inspiring, and it really kind of brought meaning to those words.

But I've been able to jump right in. As I said, I

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thank my staff for putting me in that position there. And again, my colleagues on the Commission, who've incredibly helpful in getting me up to speed and effective as I've started, so.

MS. DUDES: Great, great. So the next question, what insights or lessons learned can you share from your time at V.C. Summer that you bring to your commissioner role?

COMMISSIONER MARZANO: Well, there's definitely a couple things. I think what that experience really did, and I kind of mentioned it a little bit in my talk, you know, we as an operations group had been doing a lot of different activities preconstruction. So whatever needed to be done, somebody stepped in to, you know, fill whatever need was there.

I myself was kind of working on the design change process a little bit. And you know, the AP1000 design that was evolving before us. And as they were building them in China, they were bringing these lessons learned back and ensuring that, you know, they were incorporated here.

You know, our responsibility was, is that operations department, to make sure that those changes, you know, comported with the licensing basis and, you know, how our tech specs work, etc.

And so I think what that cemented for me is especially when it comes to these first-of-a-kind reactors, we have to expect that there will be changes as these things are being built.

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And what that means is as a regulator, we have to have a, you know, during the construction phase a process that can adapt to that and how rapidly those things, you know, specifically the design, it could be safety-related, may need updates.

So there's that example. And then just kind of one chicken-and-egg question, so most plants have a plant reference simulator, as you're familiar with, that is certified to, you know, administer the operating license. So AP1000 hadn't had one yet.

And so there's this conundrum of how do you actually, you know, give the operating portion of the exam on that simulator and whether or not it's certified for that purpose. And so that was a question I think that had gone back and forth a lot of times. And eventually it got figured out.

And I think that that's, you know, what I learned, took away from that is, you know, the NRC can adapt to these novel situations. I think, you know, we just have to anticipate them a little bit better.

MS. DUDES: Yeah, that's a great example. Next question, we heard in your remarks an emphasis on driving efficiencies at all levels of the agency. How do you envision the agency achieving those efficiencies?

COMMISSIONER MARZANO: Well, I want to take this in a couple places, and I do want to acknowledge one thing that the chairman spoke of yesterday. And I kind of alluded a little bit

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to it in a context in my remarks. Breaking down barriers to communication.

We need to break down barriers to communication with the public, as I mentioned. But I think the same applies with our applicants and pre-applicants. This question of consultation, guidance, this question of, you know, what does it actually mean to be non-promotional in that sense.

You know, I think that we, the NRC, can be promotional, but promotional of nuclear safety.

And that means, to the point that I made about leaning in, about kind of being more proactive, it's that type of mindset that I think needs to start to, you know, make its way through the agency in terms of look, when we are being proactive, you know, where in a sense in the past it made it seem like we're bordering on this promotion, non-promotion.

I think we have to remind ourselves that we promote safety. And if the actions that we are taking and the initiatives are supporting that, then that's where we should be as a regulator.

And then to the, one of the things that, you know, I didn't necessarily anticipate but something that came up in my mind as I had been getting started, in terms of efficiency and in terms of how the technology's changing, does the NRC's actual organizational structure support the most efficient processes that are needed to license these technologies quickly.

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So that is something that I know that the agency is undertaking and looking at right now. I think we've been, you know, tasked with that from the administration.

But at the same time, I think that the organizational structure itself and how that is, you know, can support efficiency just by making sure that, you know, between offices and disciplines, etc., there's a communication that's happening. And the structure enables or can hinder that type of exchange.

So those two things I think are, have been front of mind for me recently, but.

MS. DUDES: Great. I'm looking at time. We have time for probably one more question. And I thought we'd do the, do a little fun one because you had some fun in your presentation.

So and the question is since you invoked Monty Python, what is your name, what is your quest, what is the airspeed velocity of an unladen swallow?

COMMISSIONER MARZANO: Was that the African or European swallow? No, well, I think I've tried to lay it out in my remarks. You know, I don't want to ruffle any feathers here, but I'm a little bit younger side for the Commission.

But I think what that does, and what I hope to bring, is the perspective of our generation, which, you know, when it comes to the evolving views of nuclear power and where it sits relevant to the discussion about climate change and the need for

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clean energy, clean and reliable energy, you know, I think generationally these things have been changing very much.

And you know I just, I hope to represent those interests as well. I mean, I'll go ahead and say it: I've got a two-year-old at home and another on the way.

And you know, I think about this role in the broader context of, you know, what kind of planet do we leave them. And how our work relates to the solutions that will, you know, preserve their future as well.

So that's what I bring.

MS. DUDES: Perfect.

COMMISSIONER MARZANO: My quest.

MS. DUDES: Perfect, the end of it, your beautiful children.

All right, well, thank you so much, Commissioner. That ends this session. Very nicely done.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 9:46 a.m.)

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