

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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37TH ANNUAL REGULATORY INFORMATION CONFERENCE

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SPECIAL PLENARY

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WEDNESDAY

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The Session was held at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel & Conference Center and via virtual platform, at 11:15 a.m. EDT.

SPEAKERS

THE HONORABLE DAVID A. WRIGHT, Chairman, NRC

MARIA KORSNICK, President, Nuclear Energy Institute

KIMBERLY S. GREENE, President and CEO, Georgia Power

CHRISTOPHER LEVESQUE, President and CEO, TerraPower LLC

PAUL A. NOBLE, Secretary-Treasurer, International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers (IBEW)

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

JOHN TAPPERT, Acting Director, RES

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

11:16 a.m.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Are they ready? Yeah. We good? Hot mic. That's right.

So, good morning. Welcome to this particular 50-Year Look Ahead Panel. And before we get started on the panel, I wanted to take a moment one, and congratulate Mirela here on the last panel. That was very good.

DR. GAVRILAS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: It was very good. And then, for Commissioner Crowell and Commissioner Marzano, one for Commissioner Crowell, I really enjoyed the panel on collegiality.

I thought it was notable, and I really appreciated his dialogue with Commissioner, with former Chairman Burns and Bill Ostendorff, Commissioner Ostendorff. That was really good.

And for Brad's benefit, because he did say that he and I both got lowly political science degrees. I got mine. Mine was more of an ALARA degree, as low as reasonably achievable. So --

(Laughter.)

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: But, proud of it nonetheless. And then, you know, Commissioner Marzano, your youth, you know, although you bragged about it up here, it really is notable because that is something that you bring to the Commission that is an asset.

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It's something that, one, it's a perspective that we're all going to be able to benefit from. You know, I mean, I have children, you know, that are about your age maybe.

(Laughter.)

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: And having you here is like, having that dialogue with my son or my daughter, right? And understanding that.

So, I really appreciate the fact that you actually referred to that today, because we'll all benefit from that. And I look forward to working closer with you.

As we go now into this panel, the Next 50-Years, I want to say good morning to each of you and welcome. On stage with me, we have a lot of smart people.

We have people who have done a great deal and are doing great things still today. You know, their perspectives are, everybody needs to hear it, right? And can learn from them.

And so, today, I'm welcoming your perspectives on the next 50-years as we go forward. And what you think is important as we plan, you know, going forward in the next 50-years.

So, I have actually been looking forward to this panel since last year at the RIC, when it was over. We've been looking backward at our past 50 years.

And it's important to know where you came from, so you'll know where you got to go, and how, you know, you don't want

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to make those same mistakes again, that maybe you made. And then, you want to benefit and grow from those things that you did well.

So, my only disappointment is that we've only got 45 minutes. Because this, we can probably take a couple hours on.

So, on stage with me today are some incredible leaders. And if you haven't met them, please take a moment when this panel's over to come up and say hello.

And they come from different parts of the nuclear sector and as a whole. First, is Maria Korsnick, right here. She's CEO of the Nuclear Energy Institute.

And then, on the far side of Mirela here, right next is Kim Greene. Kim, wave. Is CEO of Georgia Power, the successful builders and operators, right, of Plant Vogtle, home of Vogtle Units 3 and 4, the two most recent AP1000s built in the United States.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: And I don't think they'll be the last built either. Next, we have Chris Levesque here from TerraPower. He's the President and CEO.

And, you know, one of the things that I wanted when I was thinking about putting this panel together, I wanted someone who was actually turning dirt. Right? They're turning dirt.

Okay. So, I'm excited to have you. And it's in Kemmerer, Wyoming, which I really love the mayor, by the way, of

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Kemmerer, because he's kind of southern in a way.

I mean, Kemmerer is actually spelled with another syllable, but they don't mention it, which is very southern.

(Laughter.)

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Next, is Paul Noble, down on the end. And Paul, he's the Secretary/Treasurer of the International Society of Brotherhood of Electoral Workers, IBEW. And we're really welcome, we're glad to have you here.

And then, last but not least, was Mirela.

DR. GAVRILAS: I'm back.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: She's back. And she's our EDO. And she's doing a fabulous job. And she's got a tough job, which she embraces.

And I think that, as you heard in the last panel, her, I think, she's moving toward more of a project management kind of setup arrangement within the NRC. Which, I think, is going to be beneficial. And hopefully we'll talk a little bit more about that this morning.

So, let's get right to it. Maria, thanks for being here today. So, we've all seen projections for the overwhelming increase in the energy demand is, you know, driven by advanced computing, artificial intelligence, the electrification and manufacturing, transportation sectors, all of that going on. And it's not going to stop there. Right?

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So, these technologies are constantly moving. They are not going to stay stagnant. The needs are going to continue to climb.

So, what is the nuclear industry doing to meet the demand? And what should the NRC be doing now to prepare?

MS. KORSNICK: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you very much for the invitation to have this conversation with you today.

Maybe I'll begin by just saying, as we're looking ahead, right, for the next 50 years, you know, sort of how does the next 50 years look different than the past 50 years?

And just kind of frame out, you know, how different. I was just at a CERAWeek Conference yesterday, and, you know, it was really filled with all kinds of energy providers.

You know, oil and gas, nuclear, some renewables, and, you know, the conversation very much, I'd say AI heavy. There's a lot of hyperscalers and folks like that there, you know, sort of trying to figure out how they're going to, you know, help pull this all together.

And it was just striking to me. I was in several different private conversations and large group conversations, but it was just striking to me that, you know, it kind of felt to me almost like a war effort.

And I guess I want to maybe frame that in folks' minds

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that it wasn't just, hey, this would be a cool, interesting thing to do. It was, this is what the United States needs to figure out how to do, and, very quickly from a national security perspective.

And that overtone in these conversations, I really wanted to impress, because as I reflect on what the nuclear industry has done for the last 50 years and how we've done it, whether it's how we've designed things or how we've put things forward, and then how the NRC has, you know, processed that, there's no way that's going to be okay for what we're trying to do.

And, in fact, it would be amazing if it was, there wouldn't be any changes needed. Because, it's a completely different, a completely different perspective.

And the seriousness, you know, I spoke to Secretary Wright, I spoke to Secretary Burgum. You know, they're very, very focused on this Energy Dominance Council. One's going to be the chair, one's going to be the vice chair. They're men of action. Right?

They're not going to sit around and talk policy. They're not going to sit around and talk. They want to get things done.

And in my very first meeting with Secretary Wright, he goes, okay, Maria, we got to build and we got to start building in the next 18-months. Okay. Tell me what we got to do to get there.

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And so, I really just want you to feel the pressures on this system. And it's not just on nuclear, right?

They're going to build a lot of things. But, it's really fundamental too. We need the United States to be positioned from a national security perspective, we need to lead on this AI adventure.

And, actually, even before this most recent AI conversation, if you think about it, there was already a conversation about increases, right?

We're talking about onshoring manufacturing. We're talking about transitioning to clean energy. So, there was already a conversation about we need more.

But, I would say this Administration has definitely come in with a fierce focus on baseload energy, calling, you know, it's an energy emergency that we're in right now.

And I, you know, it's real. I guess I just want to start with, it's real. So, then to your question, you know, sort of what does the next steps look like?

And from an industry perspective, you know, we're looking hard at, okay, how can we help? And how can we help, like, right now?

Okay. There's things that we want to build, and that's going to take a few years. But, what can we do right now?

And there are things we can do right now, right? You

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can restart some shuttered plants right now, right? That's in flight.

That's in flight with Constellation at Three Mile Island. It's in flight with Holtec at Palisades. There's conversations with NextEra at Duane Arnold.

We can participate right now in power uprates, right? And we can participate right now in extending licenses of assets that currently live.

And so, if we did all those kinds of things, we're talking over six gigawatts added to the grid by the end of this decade. Okay? No small thing.

I mean six gigawatts. Okay? But, that means we got to make it happen. Okay? And it's not just doing things the way that they've always been done.

And I would say that to the regulator, and I would say that to the industry, right? We have to ensure that we're getting the necessary information right there, front and center, well done.

And we also have to look at it from the perspective of can we modernize these processes? It shouldn't take us, in some cases longer to do an environmental review than it does to do the safety review. Right?

And that's actually the case for some subsequent license renewals. Okay? We just, you can't accept that anymore.

And I want to, my hat's off in one hand to the NRC,

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because you have been thinking differently. I would say thank you to Mirela for some of the improvements.

But, I would say even some of the improvements we've made in subsequent license renewal, it's not enough. It's not enough. We got to be hungrier than that.

And I would say I really appreciated the last panel that you just had on the ADVANCE Act because, I think, that is laying the groundwork for, the people that understand how to make this happen more efficiently are the people that are doing it, right?

They can appreciate things that can be done faster. Nobody's talking about with reduced safety. We're talking about with more efficiency.

And I think, I just really wanted to impress how important that is. I think, modernizing the processes that we have, already gave a great example about like, in environmental reviews.

Right sizing regulation, we can't smother some of these innovations like microreactors, with blankets and blankets and blankets of regulation that are just too heavy for the risk and the source term that they provide. So, it needs fresher thinking.

I know we contributed to that fresh thinking by sending some ideas about a more rapid deployment. You sent us back something. You said, oh no fatal flaws in that.

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Okay, that's great. No fatal flaws. But, how can we get it done? How can we advance it? How can we push forward for it?

So, I'd say modernizing, right sizing, and I would also say streamlining project management. And what do I mean by streamlining project management?

I would list it in three categories, Targets, tools, and transparencies. So, set targets that align with what the business needs are. And I don't mean just business needs of producing electricity, I mean business needs of us as the United States.

Set targets that help us bring nuclear, enable nuclear to be part of what's needed here and now.

And I would say the tools to monitor that progress and the transparency to share what the progress is, so that we can all see, hey, are we making progress or do we need to make more progress?

So, maybe I'll leave it there. I just wanted to kind of give you a flavor that it's a sincere sense of urgency.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Yeah. So, I know Mirela, you're taking some notes there, right? So, I would either, you can either respond a little bit now if you'd like, or you can do it later. It's whatever you wish.

But, I was going to ask you what you heard that either

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the NRC is addressing already? Or did, was there something that you learned here?

DR. GAVRILAS: So, I had heads up that he was going to ask me that. Hence, me sitting pen in hand, taking copious notes.

The good news is that I'm not hearing anything from Maria that is brand new. Right? But, what I am hearing is this emphasis on urgency that's making me think, as you're speaking, we need to start thinking orders of magnitude instead of factors.

And when you're talking modernizing, I'm transferring it in my mind to radical modernization, not just incremental modernization.

Am I a good listener Chair?

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: You're a good listener.

DR. GAVRILAS: Okay, thanks.

(Laughter.)

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Thank you. Kim, I'm going to come to you next. And thank you so much for coming up, because I know we have, yeah, there's another small conference going on down in Texas, right?

And it's -- some people are coming back and forth between CERAWEEK and here, like Maria did. And we're glad that you made it.

So, as I move around the country, and the world really, there is obviously an urgent need to electrify. Urgency is

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becoming more of the word of the day.

And it's going to mean that we've got to respond to things. And the industry needs to respond. We need to respond.

I keep hearing the word speed, speed, speed, right? That's how things are going. And it's at every level.

So, Georgia Power, Southern Company, you know, you recently completed the two AP1000s. You've had to deal with all types of issues from supply chain, to workforce, to rate payer impacts, and, that's not to mention COVID as well.

So, there's a lot of focus on small reactors, and SMRs, and microreactors today. But, I believe, there's, you know, a need for more big reactors too, right?

That the, I'm curious, do you, like, share that belief? And what do you think the future is for the AP1000?

MS. GREENE: Well, thank you very much. And I absolutely do share that belief. And let me just start this morning by thanking each and every one of you in this room.

Southern Company, Georgia Power did recently finish the construction of Vogtle Units 3 and 4, the only two nuclear reactors that have been built in the United States from scratch in over 30 years.

We could not have done it without you. Could not have done it without these folks. We could not have done it without these folks. It took an immense effort.

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And the NRC was joined at the hip with us along the way. And I'm very grateful for the constructive relationship that we had, the transparency, we would not have been able again, to get it done without you guys.

And there were times when it was really tough. As the Chairman just mentioned, COVID, some things that were happening overseas, things that were happening with our contractors.

And we found ourselves often having to do testing in the middle of the night. And you guys were there with us. You didn't ask us to reschedule.

We had an ITAAC process that you guys helped us make much more efficient. We started with something like 900. We ended up with less than 500.

So, it was a great effort, one that we learned a lot from. And because we have this wonderful set of lessons learned, and this first of a kind risk, in many ways mitigated in terms of design, engineering, in some ways, supply chain, workforce, we know what it takes.

And, right now, the lessons from Units 3 and 4 at Vogtle, which by the way, those four units are the largest generator of clean energy in the country. And the lessons that we learned from building Units 3 and 4, right now are being utilized by Poland, Bulgaria, and Slovenia.

Shame on us if we don't, in the United States, learn

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from those incredible lessons at Vogtle Units 3 and 4, because the need for power is immense. And we are working on uprates for Units 1 and 2 and Hatch 1 and 2.

We are right now in the process of a subsequent license extension for Units Hatch. And speed, speed, speed. We cannot do it quickly enough.

With respect to the environmental review that Maria was talking about, again, this is a subsequent license extension. The Unit has run for over 50 years really well.

We did a lot of work on the initial license extension. Let's see what we can do to try to make that process even more efficient.

And what I heard on the prior panel, which again Mirela, I really appreciated, was the insertion of let's be safe and let's use some common sense.

And so, I'm really excited about the opportunity. And, in fact, we are working very closely with TerraPower, and there needs to be more nuclear in the United States.

And we need to include more AP1000s. And just to give you some sense of scale from a utility in the state of Georgia, Maria just talked about six gigawatts of additional nuclear generation that can be harvested just with our existing fleet.

In the state of Georgia, we go through a process every three years with our public service commission. And we present to

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them our load forecast.

And out of about a 16,000/17,000 megawatt base, 16/17 gigawatt base, three years ago in 2022, we believed our growth by 2031, would be 400 megawatts on a 16-gigawatt base.

We just filed this past January, our load forecast for 2031, has now gone up by 8,200 megawatts, just in the state of Georgia. We are growing. It's extraordinarily exciting.

The needs for power are immense and people need power quickly. And many of these companies, if they don't get it here in the United States, they'll go somewhere else.

And when Maria talks about national security, that is no joke. We need these technologies here in the United States.

We need to employ workers. We should be utilizing this, again, the lessons that we learned in the workforce in building Units 3 and 4, across this country.

So, I thank you for what you've done. As we look into the future, 50 years from now will be here before we know it. 2050 is not that long from now.

And from somebody who's been in the industry now almost 35 years, I think, back some of the very first work I did, I'm an engineer, was building, or not building, I didn't build them, design equipment at Vogtle Units 1 and 2 in the early 90s.

And I was very hopeful then that there would be more nuclear large scale reactors here in the United States. And it

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happened in my career.

And in your careers, it needs to continue to happen. Big and small, we need it all. And I could keep going, but we don't have time. I'm sorry.

(Laughter.)

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: That sounds like a bumper sticker. Big and small, we need it all. There we go. I love it. Very good. Well, thank you, Kim for that.

Paul, welcome. IBEW is a well-respected partner to many utilities, you know, whether they're nuclear utilities or not.

I mean, and you have a great deal of responsibility. So, I bet probably communication, and early engagement, and contact makes a real difference in your world.

So, in addition to the obvious, you know, need to provide a trained workforce for construction, and for outages, and for transmission work, what do you and the IBEW look for?

I mean, what types of signals, or market signals, do you look for in planning for the future?

And I'm asking because of, I'm wondering if, like, does the NRC, do we need, should we be keeping a closer eye on kind of, what you and the utilities are engaged in at a -- earlier, right?

And so that when you guys are trying to, when you all

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are planning to engage with things, is that something we should look for as a signal that we need to get ahead of something, right?

Instead of being reactionary to something, right?

MR. NOBLE: Well, thank you, Chairman Wright. It's an honor to be here with you today. And on behalf of the 858,000 IBEW members who help power America's nuclear energy industry, thank you for your leadership and your partnership.

And that last word is critical. You kind of had it in your question. But, we just had our National LAMPAC meeting last week. Several of you were probably there.

And one word that kept coming up over, and over, and over again, was partnership. And I think that's critical.

I mean, what we're looking for, we're looking for any type of predictability that we can find. The more we know in advance, the better we can deliver, the better we can mobilize.

We're obviously in constant communication with our utility industry partners, sharing information, developing strategies. We're closely monitoring like everybody, the energy demand.

We see what's happening with climate change across the country. How much is AI really going to need? We hear all kinds of stories on both sides.

We're just, again, trying to find any type of predictability. We're watching our utility partners and looking

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at what they're investing in. What are they doing with their businesses, what do their models look like?

We're working and watching private capital and private industry interests. You know, potential nuclear developers, they completely understand the workforce draws for construction, and this leads to them partnering with labor to ensure that their workforce is available.

We're looking to state legislation, such as lifting nuclear moratoriums. We're looking at federal legislation. Are they going to keep production tax credits and/or the other tax credits, are they going to remain in place?

Literally, our heads are on a proverbial swivel trying to catch every signal we can so we can be prepared.

You know, at the National LAMPAC meeting, one thing I said, and I believe it's true, the one thing that I believe we do better than anyone, our greatest attribute, is we create journey-level craftspeople.

That's what we do. Training and safety. That's what we do best. And what I know is, we're this vigilant because, and we're trying to stay prepared for one reason, we want to partner with the industry and we want to win the work.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Very good. Thank you so much. Chris, I'm going to turn to you. Thank you for coming all the way from Wyoming.

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I really find it fascinating, just personally, that you work for Bill Gates. I mean, it blows my mind. But, you know, but that's a conversation for another day.

TerraPower was one of the two designs that received the awards from DOE's Advanced Reactor Demonstration Project several years ago. And so, DOE, you know, they picked a couple of winners, right?

We don't get the opportunity at the NRC to do that. We've got to be prepared for any and all comers, right?

Which means we've got to do a lot of preparation too, including the winners that are picked by others and funded.

I wanted, you know, I really wanted to have somebody here who's turning dirt. And I couldn't think of anybody other than you to invite.

So, can you share with me and with the panel and with the audience as well, how things are going?

And what's next for your team right now? Either what you need or what's the next phase, I guess?

MR. LEVESQUE: Sure. Well, thanks Chairman for your leadership. You know, I know when you speak at the RIC, you're always so focused on what are the messages for the team here on the staff.

And I think that's so important, because we are undergoing a change, all of us, in the industry, in the NRC, and

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really it's a great opportunity to kind of interpret what's going on together.

I do want to pick up, the IBEW operates the coal plant down the road from Kemmerer Unit 1. And we're going to welcome the IBEW at our referenced Natrium plant in 2030.

Thanks to you Chairman for your leadership, to the Commission, to the office divisional and branch management. And later I have some call outs to the team who are helping with this success story.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Sure.

MR. LEVESQUE: Things are going quite well with our construction license review. I think it's worth noting, you know, you talked about the Advanced Reactor Demonstration Program.

I think it's worth noting that America's next scheduled reactor to go online is Kemmerer Unit 1 in Wyoming, an advanced reactor, a Generation IV reactor. And that's been enabled by, you know, the Advanced Reactor Demonstration Program, by the NRC's, you know, vigilant review of our construction permit, by our investors, a lot of the team.

And I do want to mention some global context too, that you know, that Maria shared earlier, which is, you know, the world is moving forward with nuclear, right?

We really are getting into new builds in the U.S. But it is worth mentioning, you know, China and Russia are building

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dozens right now.

For those of us who've been in the industry a long time, it's a global industry. You know, we've met the competition, right?

China has three Generation IV reactor programs. They have a high temperature gas, a sodium reactor, not as good as Natrium, and a molten salt.

Russia has multiple commercialized, high operating performance, sodium fast reactors. So, in a way we're playing catch-up.

But with American innovation, I think we can pass the state-owned entities. I also know that when the world needs more nuclear -- and there's going to be, you know, our first plants obviously are going to be in the U.S. and in places like, you know, UK, Korea, Japan, places where -- that have nuclear today, that have strong relationships with the U.S. government.

But the growing populations of the world, you know, countries in Africa, Indonesia, they are going to turn to nuclear, right? And so, we have to have these American technologies ready, proven, proven under NRC leadership.

There's a lot of -- there's great changes happening in, you know, right-sizing and, you know, improving schedules with the NRC right now.

But I do want to remind people that when you travel

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internationally, the NRC is recognized as the gold standard.

It is so powerful when we go to the international market to say that the NRC has licensed this plant. Folks will ask that.

And there's even been experiences with past projects with U.S. technologies, when they go someplace besides the U.S. first, they're like, well, you know, why didn't you do it with the NRC first?

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Right.

MR. LEVESQUE: So I think it's so valuable for the work we're doing on the construction license review for Kemmerer Unit 1. And maybe just to share some lessons there.

Began with traditional 10 CFR 50, you know, two-step process, which we think makes sense for a first-of-a-kind technology.

Began with the pre-application review process with really significant collaboration between, you know, TerraPower and the NRC. Multiple topical reports, which, you know, was really a great process.

So, we are calling for, you know, more change, of course, in the future. You know, we'll want to see Part 53. We'll want to be able to, you know, license you know, ten Sodiums per year.

But for the first one, for the nation's first advanced

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reactor, you know, for you know, the sake of protecting people and the environment in Kemmerer, Wyoming, I think we're going through the right process here for that first one.

One of our topical reports was super interesting. It was called Nuclear Island/Energy Island Separation. That's what establishes that, you know, we should be able to treat our entire energy island on the Natrium reactor as non-nuclear, because there's this large thermal inertia in the molten salt tanks.

I want to applaud the NRC's approach to say, hey, you know what? That energy island can be in the purview of the Wyoming state regulator.

So I think, you know, Maria mentioned right-sizing earlier, I think, that's a great example where the NRC said, you know what? We're going to very carefully review the reactor building, the fuel building, you know, the control room.

But everything from those salt tanks downstream is a non-nuclear application. And, in fact, it's probably better regulated by the Wyoming Industrial Siting Council.

And just six or seven weeks ago we received approval by the Wyoming Industrial Siting Council for construction of two-thirds of our plant, which can now begin this year.

You know, we started the early excavation and the construction of our test loop last year in June. And now, because, you know, the NRC as the federal nuclear safety regulator has

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empowered the state of Wyoming, which is the right entity to regulate the non-nuclear parts of the plant, we can start that non-nuclear construction this year.

And then we can start the nuclear construction at the end of next year, where the NRC is actually ahead of schedule on our licensing review.

And we were, you know, we were so pleased two weeks ago when the NRC informed TerraPower, and the whole public, that the draft safety evaluation report for Kemmerer Unit 1 was complete.

And in fact, that shows that we're about two months ahead of schedule on the Kemmerer Unit 1 construction permit application.

So, you know, what great news to celebrate here today, that we're ahead of schedule with the NRC.

And, you know, there's so much call for the, you know, the regulatory change that has to happen. I think we all agree on that. But it's worth celebrating, you know, the successes too.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Absolutely.

MR. LEVESQUE: I think it comes down to collaboration as well. And, you know, maybe here's where I'll mention a few teams.

I think we've had great, you know, great leadership since going back to NEIMA, right?

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Congress empowered the NRC to change, and that let the Commissioners and, you know, the NRC leadership to -- it empowered making this change.

But, you know, it does come down to folks on the ground. And, you know, I won't be able to list all of the, you know, the great folks who have been keeping things moving.

But, you know, for Kemmerer Unit 1, you know, Reed Anzalone is the lead technical reviewer. Appreciate he and his team's work.

And then, you know, on the project management team, Mallecia Sutton and Patricia Vokoun. I am a project manager at heart, so I really appreciate the PM team.

This is important work. Again, we have to power our country. We have to power the AI needs both on the grid and off grid applications.

We have all these process heat needs. We really appreciate the changes that we're seeing and they're playing out in our review, in your review of our construction permit.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Yeah. Well, I will tell you that, and I used this in my presentation yesterday.

But they've committed to finish two months ahead of schedule. So we're going to make sure Jeremy and Greg and them honor that commitment, right?

So, Mirela, I'm going to come to you again. Busy

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person this morning, you are. So, is there anything that you've heard today, you know, you mentioned earlier that you didn't hear anything special that you hadn't already heard before.

Have you heard anything that's more of an ah-ha to you, or something you didn't know since you talked a minute ago?

DR. GAVRILAS: So again, not really things that we didn't know. But the emphasis on how important it is for us to keep a solid foot on the ground with regard to operating reactors, and not lose track about the oversight mission, and how we can basically be responsive and accommodating when somebody is constructing and meet them where they are.

That attitude is a good attitude to have and continue to have. How important it is for us to devote an appropriate amount of effort to license renewal and subsequent license renewal.

We are making progress. We can make more progress. I heard that loud and clear. How important it is for us to be prepared for power uprates. We expect those to be coming.

And at the same time, to basically develop the infrastructure for reviewing advanced reactors that may come in various shapes and sizes, and will need to be treated commensurate with their risk.

So, that's the message that I got. And the biggest message that I got was that we're two months early, which is a good thing, with the SER with open items.

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So no, but without any kind of glibness, the focus on operating reactors and advanced reactor, the simultaneous focus is what I heard this morning.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Very good. Thank you. We have seven minutes or so, and I got a couple of questions. And if you've got any comments on anything anybody said, please, now would be a great time. Kim?

MS. GREENE: Oh my goodness, sure. Let me just mention operating reactors. First of all, Units 3 and 4 at Vogtle are operating beautifully, which is another reason to think about the large reactors.

When we started Units 1 and 2, I think, I heard that Unit 1 might have tripped 20 times in its first fuel, refuel cycle. Unit 3 and 4, I mean, tripped once or twice.

So those units are running great. And so, look, we want to, and a lot of companies want to build more of these.

And part of the reason that they don't is because the timeline is so long. And there's so much that can happen between now and the end.

And to the extent, again, that we can learn the lessons from Units 3 and 4, and that we can take the benefits from the ADVANCE Act and beyond, and shorten timeframes for certain parts of the process, that is extraordinarily important for us to be able to confidently allow utilities like us, other utilities in

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the country, to move forward, as well as some of these large hyperscalers who are willing, potentially, to help take some of the risk.

But to them, eight to ten years just sounds like forever today. Because in their world it is.

And so, I would just encourage you guys to think about how you can shorten timelines and then commit to them, so that when people are making the decision to move forward, that they know exactly what that timeline's going to be.

And particularly again, for units that have been constructed, design once, build many. I know that's the sentiment in France.

I think, oh gosh, and I probably won't say this right, but France has one kind of reactor and 90 kind of cheeses. The United States has one kind of cheese and 90 kind of reactors.

(Laughter.)

MS. GREENE: And look, because we are Americans and we're innovative, that is a, you know, there's certainly a point of pride in that.

At the same time, standardization and not letting perfect be the enemy of good, in terms of the fact that we just proved we can build this unit. We've eliminated many risks. It's a unit that's going to run well. There is enough opportunity for all of us.

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Again, all these new technologies, as well as one that is tried and true, I would just encourage us to really think about how we can give the potential entities who want to move forward as much confidence as possible in a shorter timeline.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Paul?

MR. NOBLE: Yeah. The only two things that I wanted to add was, I think one of the things that we kind of gloss over because we're looking at a new generation and a lot of things is, but continuing to uphold the high operational standards of the current fleet is absolutely critical.

Any declines in this industry's performance will create hesitancy for further nuclear development in the U.S.

And the second thing, we talked about license renewals, but the IBEW represents valuable workers from the fossil industry. And a lot of those are becoming displaced.

There's absolutely no reason to let those folks walk out of the energy industry. And I think supporting the creation of site selection guidance and regulatory process for brownfield communities, and the potential worker transition from coal to nuclear, remains a high priority of ours.

And I'm glad to hear, glad of the things going on in Wyoming.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Chris?

MR. LEVESQUE: Maybe just a business insight to share

on how nuclear is looked at. I think there's been so much nuclear news in the last year.

But if you kind of dissect it, I think you see that people value existing nuclear so much, including Vogtle 3 and 4 and its really high operating performance, you know, the performance of the 90 plus plants in the U.S. fleet.

And that's leading to, you know, power purchase agreements with the hyperscalers, restarts, so you can see super high value placed on existing nuclear that's already been amortized, that's already got the new build risk behind us.

But you can still see a lot of concern about how do we enter these new builds, right?

And I think there's multiple boxes to check there. And, you know, the NRC's checking a big one here with being on time with our review for the next construction license.

You know, project performance is really important to us. You know, hitting those milestones, because to build that confidence on the new builds, we're really going to have to show successes.

We're going to have to show the future can be different. And again, I think the NRC's scheduled discipline on these first reviews is so, so important, because we're ticking the box on what was one of the biggest concerns, one of the biggest questions was, oh, what about the NRC?

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And so I think that's going to really, really open things up and mitigate, you know, the concern about the new build risk.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Mirela?

DR. GAVRILAS: So, I need to chime in here and reciprocate on the quality of the application. It's very important.

And on being proactive with any kind of changes or modification, engaging the appropriate technical staff so that they understand what's coming. It is that close coordination that actually leads to success.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Maria, you look like you --

MS. KORSNICK: Well, I guess I'm watching the clock, and I want to make sure that you have plenty of time, Mr. Chair, to make a closing.

You know, maybe I would just step back and say, you know, as the U.S., innovation is something we do incredibly well. And we should be proud of that.

Even the fleet that we've had today, we have innovated and innovated over the many years for it to be the high performing fleet that it is, right?

You don't get a greater than 90 percent capacity factor for over 20 years because you're lucky, right?

You get it because you're really, really good. And,

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we are. And I would just say take that innovative spirit in the same way that we see the industry innovating with all these new ideas, working with the National Labs, that pipeline is full of new things that are trying to come to the marketplace.

We need our regulator to innovate. We need our regulator to innovate and find new ways to do things and keep the high standards that you're known for.

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Yes. And I thank you for that last point, because it's important for us to know, and it bears repeating, nobody, no one is asking us to compromise safety. Right?

It's about process. It's about efficiency and getting to a reasonable assurance finding, right? In an efficient manner.

And aligned with the environmental review too, right? Because you made that comment of which, the point's been made before.

We're ahead on the safety side. We're lagging on the environmental side. Until we get both of them moving forward, we're not making progress the way we could, right, and need to.

And also, I think it was -- I need to probably say this, the existing fleet is there. It's going to need to be maintained and kept to a very high standard.

But we've got the whole new advanced reactor crowd. They're going to have to be inspected, fee-based a different way,

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looked after and inspected a different way.

And we've got to work at setting that up too, while we're doing everything else. So, we're adding to our workload.

We just need to be sure that we're identifying what we need. And we need your help in trying to identify those things ahead of time, so that we can get ready too.

So, thank our panel here today for a great discussion.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Mirela, thank you. And I think with that, we're at a break. Are we at a break now?

We're at lunch. Thank you so much.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 12:03 p.m.)

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