

1 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
2 NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
3 + + + + +
4 38TH REGULATORY INFORMATION CONFERENCE (RIC)
5 + + + + +
6 COMMISSIONER DAVID A. WRIGHT PLENARY
7 + + + + +
8 TUESDAY,
9 MARCH 10, 2026
10 + + + + +
11 The Plenary Session convened at the
12 Bethesda North Marriott Hotel and Conference Center,
13 5701 Marinelli Road, Rockville, Maryland and via
14 videoconference, at 9:00 a.m. EDT, the Honorable
15 David A. Wright, Commissioner, presiding.
16
17 PRESENT:
18 DAVID A. WRIGHT, Commissioner, Nuclear
19 Regulatory Commission
20 JOHN TAPPERT, Director, Office of Nuclear
21 Regulatory Research, NRC
22
23
24

1

2

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

3

10:31 a.m.

4

(Video played.)

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ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, please
welcome to the stage Commissioner David Wright.

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COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: I feel really
short. Well, thank you very much for the applause
and the welcome. Good morning, everyone, and thank
you for being here. I'd like to add my personal
welcome to each of you for attending the 2026 version
of the NRC's Regulatory Information Conference. It's
going to be a great week.

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You know, I believe the NRC is becoming
the place for the cool kids on the nuclear block to
work. By that, I mean we're not the same old NRC.
We're a new NRC. The place to work if you want to be
a part of enabling a nuclear future. I hope you
enjoyed the Dave dreaming video. Its purpose was to
remind me of the events in my life that have
influenced my path and helped me during my year as
chairman.

23

24

As always, a big thank you to Leon and
Kyle and Kevin from A/V for your help in making my

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1 initial idea and draft script come to life. You know,
2 we really do have a lot of fun making the videos for
3 you each year. Those guys are a very talented group,
4 and they're the ones in the back smiling right now.
5 So thank you again, fellas.

6 The organizers and the staff behind
7 everything RIC this week have worked incredibly hard
8 to make this a seamless event for you, and a huge
9 thank you to each of them. And while I'm at it, to
10 all the security personnel, thank you for keeping us
11 safe this week. I know I'm not the easiest guy to
12 keep up with. I move fast, and I can disappear pretty
13 quickly.

14 In fact, I believe last year my code name
15 was Running Back because I've been known to break
16 through your defenses from time to time. All of the
17 security personnel do a great job for us, so when you
18 get a moment, thank them for the work that they do.
19 In fact, if you don't mind, let's give the RIC
20 organizers and the security personnel a round of
21 applause right now. Thank you so much.

22 So looking around to my left over here,
23 I see some former commissioners I'd like to welcome.
24 Jeff Merrifield, I've seen him, Steve Burns, Bill

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1 Ostendorff, George Apostolakis, Bill Magwood, Jeff
2 Baran, I saw Annie Caputo. And I also see from DOE
3 Ted Garrish. He's the Assistant Secretary for
4 Nuclear Energy at DOE, and he's been a longtime friend
5 and mentor of mine. So welcome. Welcome to each of
6 you, and thank you for coming.

7 Now before I proceed any further, let me
8 address my year as chairman for a moment. 2025 was
9 a year of dynamic change for the NRC, and it was an
10 honor to serve as chairman at such a pivotal moment
11 in the agency's history. I want to thank the
12 employees of the NRC for the faith and support you've
13 shown me during my tenure here, especially last year,
14 and for the support you continue to provide.

15 Each and every day, I saw the dedication,
16 professionalism, and resilience of the NRC workforce
17 in action. We were called to do many challenging
18 things, some that took us all out of our comfort zone,
19 but you did it, and we did it. I also want to thank
20 Commissioner Crowell and Marzano for their individual
21 help last year. What you did was important and much
22 appreciated.

23 I'd also like to thank Mike King, the
24 NRC's Executive Director of Operations, for his

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1 efforts on the staff side of the NRC and for
2 performing in several roles, too. I believe we worked
3 well together, Mike. And by the way, not only do we
4 need to go out and get wings soon, I do appreciate
5 you wearing the Clemson tie today.

6 On January 8th, while I was taking the
7 Metro downtown, I learned that President Trump had
8 appointed Ho Nieh as Chairman of the NRC. When I
9 arrived to where I was going, I called Ho and
10 congratulated him on becoming the 20th Chairman of
11 the NRC and told him that I looked forward to working
12 with him and supporting him as we continue to move
13 the agency forward.

14 Let me also take this moment to thank
15 President Trump for the opportunity to serve as
16 Chairman last year and for the message delivered to
17 me during the phone call and via email from the White
18 House on his behalf in announcing Ho's appointment,
19 recognizing me for my service as Chairman during what
20 was a crucial period of transition, overseeing the
21 important and difficult task of implementing
22 Executive Order 14300, which ordered the wholesale
23 revision of the NRC's regulations and a reform of its
24 culture and structure.

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1 In doing so, even as the composition of
2 the Commission itself significantly changed. That
3 was really nice. It was necessary for the NRC to
4 evolve and be effective in a world that is moving
5 faster, innovating more rapidly, and demanding more
6 from nuclear energy than in any point in recent
7 decades. Maintaining excellence demands evolution.
8 And last year, we evolved. We changed our culture.
9 We turned the ship. And I am proud of what we
10 accomplished, including many firsts. I'll speak to
11 some of those in a few minutes.

12 In addition to thanking the President for
13 the recognition, I also want to thank him for
14 nominating me three times to the Commission over his
15 two administrations and for appointing me Chairman
16 twice, actually, in 2025. The Commission itself, as
17 you know, went through some turmoil last year. Two
18 commissioners left, and my second term expired on
19 June 30th before I was confirmed by the U.S. Senate
20 for a third term. Meaning I had to roll off the
21 Commission myself.

22 The bad news, I had to pack up everything
23 and literally move off the premises. The good news,
24 fortunately, I was confirmed for a new five-year term

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1 on July 27th, and I got to come back. I'm very
2 grateful for that. Mr. President, we're yet to meet
3 each other, something that I hope you will give me
4 the opportunity to do in 2026 so that I can thank you
5 in person. I will set that as a personal goal.

6 Now, Mr. Chairman, congratulations on
7 completing your first official plenary, although
8 being on stage at the RIC is not really anything new
9 for you, but you did a great job. I'd also like to
10 thank Secretary of Energy Chris Wright for his video
11 remarks this morning. I've enjoyed traveling with
12 the Secretary over the last year. And, Mr. Secretary,
13 we'll miss you cuz, I mean, Mr. Secretary.

14 As you know, Mr. Chairman, the ADVANCE
15 Act and the Executive Order 14300 directed the NRC to
16 modernize how we fulfill our mission, to be
17 risk-informed, efficient, predictable, and
18 forward-looking while being resolute in our
19 commitment to upholding safety.

20 Our journey to becoming a new NRC is well
21 underway, and we recognize that we sit at the center
22 of nuclear energy in this country and abroad. We
23 know all the eyes are on us at the NRC. The stakes
24 are high, and decisions made here matter. What had

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1 to change and what has changed is how we carry out
2 that mission in a world of accelerating innovation
3 and increasing expectations.

4 We set the stage early last year with the
5 creation and adoption of our new mission statement,
6 and we will not abandon our principles or our
7 commitment to safety, but instead reaffirm them in a
8 modern context. Mr. Chairman, 2025 was a year of
9 profound change at the NRC, and I have no doubt that
10 under your leadership and with the support of our
11 fellow colleagues, the NRC will continue to
12 confidently move forward in 2026.

13 Speaking of our fellow colleagues, we
14 have a full commission again, and that's a really
15 good thing. To you, Mr. Chairman, to Commissioner
16 Brad Crowell, Commissioner Matt Marzano, and
17 Commissioner Doug Weaver, our newest addition who was
18 also voted out of committee last week for a new
19 five-year term beginning July 1st, congratulations.
20 Thank each of you for your willingness to serve this
21 country and for your sacrifice and the sacrifices of
22 your families, too, in order to do this job.

23 I look forward to working closely with
24 each of you to advance our mission, strengthen this

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1 remarkable agency, and continue to make great things
2 happen at the NRC. In addition, and on behalf of my
3 team, Team Wright, I want to thank each of your staff
4 members for the way they work and communicate with
5 our office to advance the agency's mission each and
6 every day.

7 And speaking of Team Wright, my team, the
8 best team in federal government, thank you for all
9 you do in support of me, the NRC, the American people,
10 and in support of each other. Charles Kreuzberger,
11 Kim Lora, Champa Rajapakse, Mandy Mauer, Jacki
12 Storch, Jonathan Marciano, Travis Jones, Mike Benson,
13 and Kevin Coyne, you all are simply the best, and
14 it's an honor to work with each one of you.

15 I have a special thank you to Suzanne
16 Dennis for leading Team Wright last year and to Jill
17 Shepherd and Jim O'Driscoll for their work last year
18 as well. And by the way, Commissioner Weaver, we
19 missed Joelysa McLeod too, and she's in your office
20 now.

21 Now, it wouldn't be a RIC plenary without
22 me giving a quick family update. This year is a rare
23 RIC for me because none of my children are expecting
24 or have had -- given birth to a new grandchild in the

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1 past year, and that's okay. That's okay. They're
2 way too busy keeping up with the little ones anyway.

3 My mother, who will be 95 in July, is the
4 longest living person in her family's history and the
5 longest living on the Wright side too. Her parents
6 gave her, her brothers and sisters, some amazing
7 genes for living long lives, genes I hope she's passed
8 on to me and my sister too. Mom had a hard few weeks
9 back in between Thanksgiving and Christmas. In fact,
10 she gave us a really good scare, but she's a true
11 fighter and she's recovering well now. I will tell
12 you that she's one tough cookie, one tough cookie.

13 My newest granddaughter, Hadley Mae
14 Wright, a gift from God to my youngest son, Andrew,
15 and his wife, Morgan, just over a year ago, is the
16 youngest addition to our family. She's quite smart
17 and she walked at eight months. I told my son she
18 won't sit down again until he buys her a car.

19 Those two blessings of our family -- on
20 our family, of my mom and of Hadley Mae, allowed me
21 the opportunity to take this picture of the oldest
22 and youngest living Wrights at Hadley Mae's first
23 birthday party last month. I have no doubt that this
24 picture and others like it will become even more

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1 meaningful to our family in the years to come too.

2 My oldest son, Austin, his wife,
3 Christine, and their two children, Hank and Nellie,
4 are living their best life in Little Rock, Arkansas.
5 They finished a big outdoor kitchen and deck remodel
6 recently so that they could entertain a lot more than
7 they had been able to, which they did when Papa
8 visited them the week before Christmas.

9 My oldest daughter, Kimberly, who, like
10 me, is a colon cancer survivor, continues to teach
11 kindergarten and educate the future leaders of the
12 community. Aunt Berly, as she is known, is the best
13 aunt any niece or nephew could ask for too. Last
14 month brought homes in South Carolina some very cold
15 temperatures and a rare six to eight inches of snow.
16 And as most teachers are, Kimberly and her crew were
17 very well prepared.

18 Talking about having to be prepared for
19 anything. Oh my gosh. My youngest daughter,
20 Courtney, and her husband, Bucky, they're the parents
21 of the majority of my grandchildren, Addison, Ty,
22 Hannah, and the twins, Caroline and Wyatt. One
23 thing's for sure, something is always happening at
24 the Hudson household. And speaking of the twins, you

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1 may remember when they were born right before the RIC
2 seven years ago. They're a busy pair today and
3 involved in everything. They love dance, soccer, and
4 especially after school with Aunt Berly. They don't
5 miss many opportunities either.

6 Recently, a group of monks embarked on a
7 walk for peace pilgrimage on foot from Texas to
8 Washington, DC. They drew thousands of people in
9 every town they walked through along the way until
10 they finally arrived at their destination here in
11 Washington, DC right before Valentine's Day. This
12 picture was taken about six weeks ago when the monks,
13 along with a dog named Loca, who joined the monks on
14 their walk shortly after they crossed the border at
15 the Texas line. They walked through my hometown in
16 South Carolina on their way up here.

17 More precisely, their route took them to
18 within a block of where the twins lived. So Caroline
19 and Wyatt came out to support them and one of the
20 monks stopped and gave each one of them a flower.
21 How cool is that?

22 I get a lot of strength from my family.
23 Because of them and through them, my purpose is more
24 defined and my resolve greater. I believe it's

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1 important to be reminded of who you are and where you
2 came from. Reminded of the milestones and markers in
3 your life that helped shape you and prepare you.
4 Remembering those things can help bring you through
5 difficult times and challenges we all certainly will
6 face and can help re-engage you with the strength and
7 confidence you may have forgotten was already within
8 you.

9 As I mentioned earlier, I drew on lessons
10 from my own life this past year. Times when I had to
11 learn and practice real patience. Times when I had
12 to put in the work and the time in order to get a
13 little stronger or a little faster. Times when I had
14 to confront life and death challenges and make
15 difficult decisions quickly. Times when I had to
16 rely on God's grace and the help of others in an
17 effort just to stay alive and help my daughter stay
18 alive.

19 For me, 50 years of umpiring the game of
20 baseball, my years of running long distance at
21 Clemson University and my daughter Kimberly and my
22 battles against colon cancer showed and taught me
23 things about myself that I did not know were in my
24 DNA. Being a baseball umpire isn't for the timid,

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1 especially when you're behind the plate with 90 mile
2 an hour fastballs coming at you. I did some simple
3 math once on how many games I may have called in 50
4 years.

5 I mean being conservative, calling just
6 eight games a week for only 13 weeks a year over 50
7 years easily gets you to 5,000 games. And if in each
8 of those games I made half of the people happy, well,
9 that was a good night. I learned how to be
10 comfortable making tough but fair calls in real time
11 and performing under scrutiny too with parents
12 usually sitting directly behind the fence at home
13 plate helping me, if you know what I mean. Some of
14 those parents thought they were pretty good too.

15 Baseball umpires are at their best when
16 they're invisible, letting the game happen without
17 making themselves part of the game. Good baseball
18 umpires follow a three-step process, three simple
19 words, pause, read, and react. When a baseball is
20 put into play, good umpires get into the proper
21 position and they pause. And by that I mean they
22 watch as the play unfolds before them. Then they
23 read what they saw, and next they react and they sell
24 what they saw by making a loud forceful call, leaving

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1 no doubt as to what they saw. It was through baseball
2 that I learned what makes a good team.

3 Baseball consists of two teams, nine
4 players each, playing against each other on offense
5 and defense. Each of the nine players plays a
6 different position on the field and they need to know
7 what their individual responsibility is in any given
8 situation. Not all teams do that well. Players on a
9 good team, they know their individual positions and
10 know their individual responsibilities almost
11 instinctively before a ball is hit to them or to a
12 teammate, regardless of the situation.

13 Players on a good team seem to move in
14 harmony with each other in a natural rhythm when
15 they're making a play on a batted ball. And when
16 that happens, man, baseball is a beautiful game to
17 watch. Trying moments challenge us and they shape
18 us. They test our judgment, strengthen our
19 resilience, and sharpen our ability to act with
20 clarity under pressure. They provide us with
21 opportunities to grow, too. Those experiences become
22 stepping stones preparing us not just to face future
23 challenges, but to meet all of them with greater
24 assurance when it matters most.

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1 My first week as a student at Clemson
2 University, just months after I had graduated from
3 high school, I had a boneheaded idea to try out for
4 the Tigers cross-country team. I ran only a little
5 more than a year while I was in high school, which
6 isn't that much, really, although I did have some
7 success. Even so, I wasn't recruited by any college
8 or university at all.

9 When I got to Clemson, there were seven
10 or eight scholarship long-distance runners already on
11 the roster, and 20 other guys that were like me. They
12 were going to go after the same thing I was, one of
13 the four remaining spots on the team. I didn't know
14 if I should try out, if I'd be seriously looked at or
15 considered at all, or if I could actually make the
16 team. What I did have, though, was heart, the will
17 to give it everything I had. And looking back,
18 probably a touch of stupidity, too.

19 The training during that month-long
20 tryout period was harder than anything I'd ever
21 experienced before. Two-a-day workouts, 6 to 8 miles
22 at 5:45 in the morning, and then 10 to 14 miles of
23 training in the afternoon, sometimes split up in
24 combinations of half-miles or mile repeats or

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1 two-mile repeats, or repeat 400 meters until you felt
2 so bad you couldn't eat afterwards.

3 Long story short, I made the team. I
4 even made the seven-man traveling squad, too. What
5 that experience taught me has served me well in my
6 life because I learned about pain and how to push
7 through it. I learned about how to manage my body
8 and how to recover and heal. I learned what my
9 physical limits were and what my body responded to
10 best to help me improve. Most importantly, I learned
11 to never give up or quit. I will never forget what
12 I went through or what those years have meant to me
13 in my life.

14 You know, as you saw me being reminded of
15 in the Dave dreaming video, colon cancer is another
16 significant marker in my life, twice, as a matter of
17 fact. And by that I mean for me and as the dad of a
18 daughter who faced it.

19 What I learned through my running
20 experience at Clemson helped me when I went through
21 surgery and chemotherapy for colon cancer, especially
22 in managing and pushing through pain, knowing my
23 limits, and never giving in, giving up, or quitting.
24 Just like I observed in baseball, good teams work

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1 seamlessly together as one team.

2 In my fight against colon cancer, I
3 needed a great team of doctors and surgeons,
4 oncologists, nurses, caregivers, and prayer warriors,
5 all working together seamlessly for me, and then for
6 my daughter after me. I had to put together a team
7 quickly, one that I could trust to work together, one
8 that would communicate often, and one where each
9 member of the team was focused on the same goal.

10 They provided me the comfort and the
11 confidence I needed in that moment to fight, and they
12 provided my daughter the same. We will all face
13 uncertainties, difficulties, and personal trials,
14 including having to face our fears. And because
15 uncertainties, difficulties, trials, and fears never,
16 ever go away, we have to learn how to deal with them,
17 to not be afraid to take them on, and to do something
18 about them.

19 Whatever your sources of strength are,
20 God, family, friends, whatever it may be, when times
21 are difficult, you need to call on those sources and
22 rely on them. And if you need it, don't be afraid to
23 ask others for help too.

24 For me, personally, I'm a man of faith,

1 and I know I'm never alone, never. I don't just
2 believe, I know God's got my back. I've experienced
3 it, and I'm confident that he's prepared the path
4 ahead of me. That belief helps make what might be
5 unbearable bearable for me, and what might be
6 uncomfortable comfortable.

7 In addition to my family, I also draw
8 strength and confidence from you, my NRC family.
9 Throughout the past year, I often found myself
10 reflecting on the moment we were in at the NRC and
11 the path that brought us where we were. There was
12 plenty of fear and uncertainty inside the NRC last
13 year. The agency faced record-high attrition with
14 significant losses across mission-critical
15 disciplines at all levels, including senior
16 leadership.

17 As a result, succession planning went out
18 the window, right? Workforce pressures grew as
19 rising demand for specialized technical expertise
20 increased from outside of the agency. Many
21 retirement-eligible employees opted to retire, and
22 the need to train staff to review new or novel
23 technologies alongside established systems grew.

24 Although the agency suffered losses, the

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1 NRC did not lose its way or the ability to perform
2 its mission. Instead, everyone stepped up.
3 Everyone. Employees with decades of service stepped
4 up, taking on new roles and new responsibilities.
5 Employees with less run time at the agency rose to
6 the occasion, forging their own path, and began
7 creating their own legacy. You turned the ship. And
8 you should take pride in what you accomplished too.

9 So just how did a nuclear safety
10 regulator meet the moment, modernizing at the pace of
11 innovation while remaining committed to following its
12 north star, safety, our strike zone over home plate?

13 Well, again, you leaned in, you rolled up
14 your sleeves, and asked some difficult questions
15 about our processes, our structures, and our culture.
16 You assessed whether systems designed for a different
17 era were still serving today's needs. And you did it
18 with confidence and conviction. You focused on
19 modernizing licensing frameworks to better
20 accommodate advanced technologies.

21 You focused on improving regulatory
22 predictability and transparency, and enhancing
23 coordination, both internally and with our federal
24 partners, and with our international counterparts.

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1 You should take pride in what you accomplished,
2 because this evolution empowered and energized the
3 agency to achieve some remarkable accomplishments.
4 Here are just a few.

5 In the area of materials, you completed
6 more than 100 licensing actions, covering facilities,
7 new fuels, and storage and transportation. The NRC
8 also conducted over 150 inspections across fuel
9 facilities, storage sites, and transport operations.
10 Specifically for new fuels, the NRC approved six fuel
11 facility and four transportation applications. The
12 agency streamlined oversight for advanced fuels,
13 including HALEU, and are actively engaging with
14 applicants, preparing for fuel cycle licensing, and
15 we continue updating guidance to match new designs
16 and enrichment levels.

17 Staff issued a first-of-a-kind license
18 for DISA Technologies. In just six months, half the
19 usual review time for a groundbreaking uranium mine
20 waste remediation technology, which addressed a
21 priority for Congress, tribes, and other
22 stakeholders. In the reactor arena, the NRC
23 accelerated licensing for advanced small modular and
24 micro-reactors, achieving milestones, such as

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1 NuScale's early standard design approval, fee
2 reductions for micro-reactors, expedited timeline
3 reviews, and extended design certification from 15 to
4 40 years.

5 The agency also approved the restart of
6 the Palisades Nuclear Plant, a historic first, and we
7 completed several early plant service life extensions
8 as well as numerous plant power uprate applications.
9 And Ho earlier mentioned some others, like TerraPower
10 and Part 53.

11 On the fusion front, the NRC is
12 developing a technology-inclusive framework to
13 position the U.S. as a leader in this emerging field.
14 You got some important things done on the mission
15 support side of the agency too. The agency
16 established a new qualification program governance
17 framework that standardizes how qualifications are
18 developed and overseen, improving the consistency,
19 transparency, and accountability of NRC training
20 programs while ensuring agency-wide operational needs
21 are fully supported.

22 We are underscoring our commitment to be
23 a partner in progress in some pretty unique ways too.
24 For example, the agency is collaborating with NASA in

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1 support of its initiative to develop and deploy a
2 nuclear fission power system on the moon by 2030. By
3 working to strengthen the nuclear supply chain,
4 expanding opportunities for small businesses while
5 advancing the NRC's mission to enable the safe and
6 secure use of nuclear technology.

7 And in less than a month, the agency will
8 deploy NEXUS, an agency-wide system that streamlines
9 workforce and project management, strengthens
10 strategic workforce planning, optimizes resources,
11 and boosts coordination across the NRC. Most
12 impressively, you accomplished all of this even as we
13 navigate a nuclear energy landscape that is changing
14 faster than ever. I know I speak for my colleagues
15 when I express how proud I am of what the agency
16 achieved during the past year, and you should be proud
17 too.

18 As I stand before you this morning, I
19 remain inspired by you, the employees of the NRC,
20 whose dedication made these successes possible. I
21 got to tell you, though, believe it or not, this is
22 just the beginning. More opportunities lie ahead.
23 Expectations will remain high. The pace of change
24 will not slow. Our regulatory approach must continue

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1 to evolve, become more efficient, more responsive,
2 and more agile.

3 But you're already demonstrating that you
4 got this. You're ready for the future. And you also
5 know that effective regulation is going to require
6 strong collaboration with everyone. Collaboration
7 with the Congress, collaboration with the White House
8 on the goals of the administration, collaboration
9 with the Department of Energy to advance research and
10 safe deployment, collaboration with industry and
11 other stakeholders to improve clarity and efficiency,
12 and collaboration with our international counterparts
13 to strengthen global safety standards.

14 When each institution fulfills its
15 distinct role with professionalism and transparency,
16 trust is built, and the entire nuclear enterprise
17 becomes stronger. For industry, this partnership is
18 about clarity, certainty, and reliability. For the
19 public, it's about engagement and trust. For the NRC
20 staff, it's about empowerment and purpose. For the
21 NRC as an agency, it means staying true to our mission
22 and making independent science-backed regulatory
23 decisions.

24 Let me be clear about something, though.

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1 Collaboration does not mean compromising our
2 commitment to safety. Safety remains and will always
3 be the core principle that anchors every decision we
4 make. Safety and innovation are not opposing forces,
5 though. They can and should move forward together.
6 The NRC can and will be both a proponent of safety
7 and a partner in progress.

8 Looking forward, I see a dynamic
9 landscape full of promise, one that's moving fast and
10 demands focus. And you, the employees of the NRC,
11 you're already aware and planning for it. The NRC is
12 anticipating a significant wave of new licensing
13 activity for advanced reactors, new fuel cycle
14 activities, and the expanded use of existing nuclear
15 technologies.

16 Last I checked, there were 24 potential
17 applicants in some form of early engagement with the
18 NRC. That's a lot of potential future licensing work,
19 and the NRC will be ready for it. On top of those
20 24, probably another 36 potential applicants who have
21 not yet really formally engaged with the NRC.
22 Together, that represents more than 60 potential
23 applicants.

24 Now, regardless of if they all

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1 materialize or not, it's still an exciting time to
2 work at the NRC. The future is unfolding right before
3 us, and the NRC stands ready to support whatever the
4 future brings to us. We will not be the roadblock.

5 In addition, the NRC continues to advance
6 our commitments under the ADVANCE Act and Executive
7 Order 14300 with a comprehensive agency
8 reorganization designed to focus our resources on top
9 priorities, strengthen our technical capabilities,
10 and boost the efficiency and agility of our workforce
11 to meet emerging challenges.

12 These are substantial undertakings that
13 will shape how we carry out our mission for years to
14 come. And they are possible only because of the
15 professionalism, expertise, and commitment of you our
16 dedicated employees. You continue to deliver on core
17 responsibilities, even as you've had to integrate the
18 work of change itself. You have the experience of
19 the last 50 years to guide you too.

20 As a commissioner who cares about the
21 people of the NRC, I admire the support you have for
22 each other and the passion you have for what you do.
23 That's why I've never, never doubted the NRC's
24 ability to rise to meet the moment. So don't doubt

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1 yourself either. Don't doubt your ability or your
2 value to this great agency, and don't be afraid of
3 tomorrow. Instead, embrace what tomorrow can be and
4 what you can help make it be.

5 You have the skill sets needed to keep
6 the NRC on the right path. You have the expertise
7 needed to move the agency forward. You have what it
8 takes to meet the moment. It's been there all along
9 with you, and if you need proof, just look at what
10 you accomplished last year. So don't fear, and don't
11 worry about things you can't control. It will only
12 stress you out.

13 Instead, take control and be in control
14 of those things that you have the power and the
15 ability to control. Focus on those things in your
16 daily life and at work that make you invaluable to
17 others. Trust yourself. Believe in yourself. If
18 you do, good things and good outcomes will follow,
19 and the future will take care of itself.

20 To my colleagues, the agency must invest
21 in building a strong, future-ready workforce and
22 thoughtfully redefine our organizational structure.
23 Both efforts we are actively advancing right now.
24 Developing and sustaining our workforce is essential

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1 to the NRC's long-term success in fulfilling our
2 mission, because our staff is the backbone of our
3 agency. They are our greatest and most essential
4 asset.

5 Their expertise continues to shape
6 regulatory practices and standards that are
7 recognized and respected around the world, and what
8 has been accomplished by us as an agency is because
9 of their dedication, professionalism, and commitment
10 to our mission.

11 In fact, to meet our mission of enabling,
12 advancing, and deploying nuclear technologies, we
13 must strengthen recruitment and retention of our
14 workforce, enhance training and knowledge transfer,
15 and prioritize leadership development. It's
16 essential that we build an agile, skilled workforce
17 capable of meeting evolving challenges and sustaining
18 technical excellence.

19 For the employees already working at the
20 NRC, your work has never been more consequential.
21 The last year asked a great deal of you, and you
22 adapted and delivered. You adapted to new
23 expectations, new processes, and new demands, often
24 while maintaining a full workload. Your

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1 professionalism, expertise, belief in our mission,
2 and your commitment to public service are the
3 foundation of the agency's credibility.

4 For those watching or listening this
5 morning and considering a career in public service,
6 there are few places in federal government where
7 technical expertise and public purpose intersect so
8 directly as they do here at the NRC. I encourage you
9 to consider joining an organization recognized around
10 the world for its rigor and integrity, working along
11 some of the most accomplished subject matter experts
12 anywhere in the world, and help shape the next chapter
13 of nuclear energy here and abroad.

14 Now is the time to be part of the NRC.
15 The people who make up this agency are amazing, and
16 they are fast becoming the cool kids on the nuclear
17 block. The responsibility entrusted to this agency
18 has never been more visible or more consequential.
19 Moments like this do not call for hesitation. They
20 call for action, action to enable with a clarity of
21 purpose, with transparency, with engagement, all
22 while maintaining steadfastly to our core mission.
23 That is who we are.

24 We are an agency grounded in expertise,

1 strengthened by experience, committed to continuous
2 improvement. We will continue to evolve where
3 evolution is required. We will act with urgency where
4 urgency is warranted, and we will do so without ever
5 losing sight of the principle that defines us, safely
6 enabling nuclear technologies. Safety will not
7 follow progress either. It will lead it.

8 As nuclear energy starts its next
9 chapter, the NRC will meet it head on with confidence
10 and resolve. We are ready for the responsibility,
11 ready for the pace, and ready for the work ahead. We
12 will continue meeting the moment, and we will do so
13 with safety leading the way. Thank you so much for
14 your time and attention this morning.

15 MR. TAPPERT: Okay. Well, thank you,
16 Commissioner, for those remarks. And I always enjoy
17 seeing what you and the A/V folks can put together
18 there, so. We don't have a lot of time left in this
19 session, so let's try to hit a couple of questions
20 here.

21 The first one I have is, you've been a
22 big supporter of international programs. How is this
23 important in the current energy landscape, and how
24 does it lead to achieving energy security and safety

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1 here and abroad?

2 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes. Well, thank
3 you. First off, our Office of International Programs
4 does a remarkable job. They're very engaged.
5 They're small. We need to help them grow because
6 they can help us a lot. Today, we're in the
7 whole-of-government approach for everything, right?
8 And we work well. I've been on several. In fact,
9 I'm leaving this weekend to go to Poland and Hungary.
10 But I've been on whole-of-government things to
11 Romania, to Kenya, and to Ghana, working with DOE,
12 working with Commerce, working with State. And it
13 works, and that's the message we need to be sending.

14 And so it's critically important, and
15 it's important to our vendors, the people who are
16 designing the systems that are coming through getting
17 licensed now, right? That's why changing that from
18 15 to 40 on the design certification was so important.
19 You've got AP1000. They're getting ready to come in
20 for a change, which is good, and that'll be the one
21 everybody builds. You've got NuScale. It's got
22 their certification already. They can go to market.
23 You've got others that, you know, are coming through
24 and starting. That wave is getting ready to start.

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1 And it's important because if it's got
2 the NRC seal of approval, the international community
3 would like to use it, and I think that's -- for us,
4 energy security is important, not just here but
5 abroad.

6 MR. TAPPERT: Okay. Thank you for that.
7 And in your speech, you referred to a new NRC and it
8 being the cool kid on the nuclear block. Can you
9 elaborate on that?

10 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yeah. I mean, look
11 what happened during, you know, last year. You know,
12 everything happens for a reason. There is nothing
13 that just -- there's a purpose behind everything.
14 So, I'm one that always looks at the silver lining
15 kind of things. You want to look at the positive in
16 everything because the negative will do nothing but
17 drive you nuts.

18 So, our people, you know, we had people
19 leave. It was a perfect storm of opportunity for
20 many of them, right? And I don't fault them at all.
21 But the people who stayed are passionate for the
22 mission here. They're here because they love the
23 mission of this agency and they love the NRC and
24 they're dedicated to what they do.

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1 We had people like Mike King who had
2 opportunities hitting a lot faster than maybe he
3 thought was going to be coming in his life. But then
4 we had others who were behind him, you know, who had
5 less run time at the agency, who have -- seriously,
6 they stepped up in a big way, which is then going to
7 open opportunity for others to join this fine -- I
8 mean, this is a great agency.

9 And so that's what I mean by now we're
10 the cool kids, you know. We're the ones that can
11 shape the future. You can't do it unless you're part
12 of the NRC. So, if you're looking to make that kind
13 of hay, come here. This is the place to be.

14 MR. TAPPERT: Okay. Well, great
15 recruiting pitch. I think that's a good place to end
16 it. And thank you again.

17 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Thank you so much.

18 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
19 went off the record at 11:18 a.m.)
20
21
22

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