DOWNLOAD PDF OVERSIGHT HEARING ON THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Chapter 1 : Nuclear Regulatory Commission Officials Testify Oversight Hearing, Dec 13

Oversight of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission March 21, 00 AM The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works will hold a hearing entitled, "Oversight of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.".

Four of the five commissioners of the NRC testified before the committees. This was the first congressional hearing with recently appointed NRC chairman, Allison Macfarlane, who was confirmed on July 9 to replace former chairman Gregory Jaczko. Jaczko resigned from his position amid accusations of mismanagement from members on the commission and employees. Shimkus stressed his concern of post-Fukushima regulatory changes on nuclear plants throughout the United States. Tiers two and three are currently in development. Commissioner William Magwood began his testimony by revisiting events handled by the NRC in the past year. This included, in addition to those mentioned earlier by Macfarlane, the licensing of the first uranium enrichment facilities not constructed by the government. Two months later, it was shut down due to seismic issues. Shimkus asked if the NRC was initially correct on its assessments in May. Svinicki said additional studies were requested after the Fukushima events. She said the amount of material that could be released in a seismic event was more than estimated. Green continued by asking when the risk evaluation of on-site storage pools would be started. Svinicki said the NRC is aware of these reports and they have helped with the U. Green asked about the differences between the regulatory requirements of Japan and the United States. Whitfield revisited the requirement of cost-benefit analysis, asking if it would be beneficial to include this in future actions. Macfarlane said each action would have to be considered individually. Magwood said he agreed with Macfarlane. Macfarlane said in fiscal year FY , the minority servicing institutions grant program awarded 26 grants. Fifteen of these awards went to HBCUs. In , the goal of review completions was 36 months. The time has now increased to 42 to 48 months, with some pushing 60 months. The IUP develops a trained nuclear energy workforce through scholarships and fellowships. Representative John Barrow D-GA asked about the status of construction on the two new nuclear plants. Macfarlane answered this issue was a Tier 3 activity that the NRC will look at. Capps presented the alternative method of dry-cask storage and asked about their performance in Japan during the Fukushima disaster. McKinley wanted to know how much money has been spent on the Yucca project. McKinley asked which of the two options, a geological repository or recycling, would be the direction the U. Macfarlane said that there is a need for a final repository, regardless of which option. Representative Eliot Engel D-NY focused his questions on decommissioning costs and how several older plants do not have enough money saved for dismantling. He asked Macfarlane what would happen if one of the underfunded reactors needed to be decommissioned. Representative Steve Scalise R-LA asked if any initial thoughts after Fukushima have been changed by newly available data. In the time since the disaster, the NRC has progressed in taking appropriate steps to ensure nuclear safety. Svinicki noted that she voted to take the recommendations and open them to public comment before moving forward. It helps prepare to mitigate issues when there is a loss of power. Svinicki noted the task force recommendations and how the handling of the report has been portrayed. Magwood agreed with Svinicki. Ostendorff closed by saying that the media does not often credit the NRC for including recommendations made by the NRC staff. Representative Tim Murphy R-PA questioned Macfarlane once more on her opinions of Yucca Mountain, noting how she has shown her disinterest in the project.

Chapter 2 : State Oversight of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission

The Department of Energy's Role in Advancing the National, Economic, and Energy Security of the United States September 15, at am.

In these four regions NRC oversees the operation of US nuclear reactors , namely power-producing reactors, and 36 non-power-producing reactors. Oversight is done on several levels. Each power-producing reactor site has resident inspectors, who monitor day-to-day operations. Numerous special inspection teams, with many different specialties, routinely conduct inspections at each site. Recordkeeping system[edit] NRC has a library, which also contains online document collections. It has been upgraded in October and is now webbased. Documents from before are available in paper or microfiche formats. Copies of these older documents or classified documents can be applied for with a FOIA request. Training and accreditation[edit] Commission headquarters NRC conducts audits and training inspections, observes the National Nuclear Accrediting Board meetings, and nominates some members. Since the nuclear industry already had developed training and accreditation, NRC issued a policy statement in , endorsing the INPO program. In , NRC issued a final rule on operator initial licensing examination, [25] that allows, but does not require, companies to "prepare, proctor, and grade" their own operator initial licensing examinations. Facilities can "upon written request" continue to have the examinations prepared and administered by NRC staff, but if a company volunteers to prepare the examination, NRC continues to approve and administer it. According to the GAO report, NRC officials did not visit the company or attempt to personally interview its executives. Upon receipt of the license, GAO officials were able to easily modify its stipulations, and remove a limit on the amount of radioactive material they could buy. A spokesman for the NRC said that the agency considered the radioactive devices a "lower-level threat"; a bomb built with the materials could have contaminated an area about the length of a city block, but would not have presented an immediate health hazard. Nuclear renaissance in the United States Between and , 13 companies applied to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for construction and operating licenses to build 25 new nuclear power reactors in the United States. However, the case for widespread nuclear plant construction was eroded due to abundant natural gas supplies, slow electricity demand growth in a weak U. The NRC has often sought to hamper or deny public access to the regulatory process, and created new barriers to public participation. Nuclear power regulation is a textbook example of the problem of "regulatory capture" â€” in which an industry gains control of an agency meant to regulate it. Regulatory capture can be countered only by vigorous public scrutiny and Congressional oversight, but in the 32 years since Three Mile Island, interest in nuclear regulation has declined precipitously. A worker named George Galatis at the Millstone Nuclear Power Plant in Connecticut kept warning management, that the spent fuel rods were being put too quickly into the spent storage pool and that the number of rods in the pool exceeded specifications. Management ignored him, so he went directly to the NRC, which eventually admitted that it knew of both of the forbidden practices, which happened at many plants, but chose to ignore them. The whistleblower was fired and blacklisted. This gives the appearance of a regulator which is acting in a commercial capacity, "raising concerns about a potential conflict of interest ". Environmental impact statements EIS were prepared for each reactor to extend the operational period from 40 to 60 years. One study examined the EISs and found significant flaws, included failure to consider significant issues of concern. NRC management asserted, without scientific evidence, that the risk of such accidents were so "Small" that the impacts could be dismissed and therefore no analysis of human and environmental was even performed. Such a conclusion is scientifically indefensible given the experience of the Three Mile Island , Chernobyl , and Fukushima accidents. By disregarding this basic requirement, NRC effectively misrepresented the risk posed to the nation by approximately two orders of magnitude i. Jaczko looked for lessons for the US, and strengthened security regulations for nuclear power plants. For example, he supported the requirement that new plants to be able to withstand an aircraft crash. The original, un-redacted version was leaked to the public.

The un-redacted version which was leaked to the public highlights the threat that flooding poses to nuclear power plants located near large dams and substantiates claims that NRC management has intentionally misled the public for years about the severity of the flooding. The leaked version of the report concluded that one-third of the U. It also shows that NRC management was aware of some aspects of this risk for 15 years and yet it had done nothing to effectively address the problem. Some flooding events are so serious that they could result in a "severe" nuclear accident, up to, and including, a nuclear meltdown. This criticism is collaborated by two NRC whistleblowers who accused their management of deliberately covering up information concerning the vulnerability of flooding, and of failing to take corrective actions despite being aware of these risks for years. Larry Criscione, a second NRC risk engineer also raised concerns about the NRC withholding information concerning the risk of flooding. David Lochbaum, a nuclear engineer and safety advocate with the Union of Concerned Scientists: An NRC letter dated states that "a Jocassee Dam failure is a credible event" It goes on to state that "NRC staff expressed concerns that Duke has not demonstrated that the [null Oconee Nuclear Station] units will be adequately protected. NRC estimated the odds that dams constructed like Jocassee will fail is about 1 in 3, failures per year. Oconee is licensed to operate for another 20 years. The odds of the Jocassee Dam failing over that period are 1 in NRC requires risks to be investigated if they have a frequency of more than 1 in 10, years. For a reactor operating over a period of 40 years, these risks must be evaluated if they have a chance greater than a 1 in of occurring. NRC identified 34 reactors that lie downstream from a total of more than 50 dams. More than half of these dams are roughly the size of the Jocassee dam. This dam failure rate does not include risks posed by earthquakes or terrorism. Thus, the true probability may be much higher. NRC stated that the probability of a severe accident is so incredible that the consequences can be dismissed from the analysis of impacts in its relicensing environmental impact statements EIS. Critics charge that if these relicensing EISs failed to evaluate the risks of flooding, then how can the public be confident that NRC did not mislead stakeholders concerning other risks such as the potential for a nuclear meltdown. NRC officials stated in June that US nuclear safety rules do not adequately weigh the risk of a single event that would knock out electricity from the grid and from emergency generators, as a quake and tsunami did in Japan. The new safety standards will take up to five years to fully implement.

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Chapter 3 : Oversight of NRC Management and the Need for Legislative Reform - Energy and Commerce

(1) OVERSIGHT OF THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, U.S. SENATE, COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS, Washington, DC. The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m. in room

However, the NRC may enter into agreements or memoranda of understanding MOUs allowing states to supplement some of its safety-related regulatory power. Federal law also permits the NRC to enter into agreements giving states the primary regulatory power over certain industrial, academic, and medical nuclear material licensees. The NRC controls the licensing, construction, manufacturing, operation, inspection, and compliance monitoring of nuclear material and facilities. Supreme Court has held that states may not enact laws concerning any field under NRC regulatory authority. Permissible areas of state control include plant pre-construction issues such as need for the plant, land use, siting, zoning, and post-construction issues such as rate setting and monitoring certain non-radioactive emissions. Becoming an agreement state requires following detailed procedures and usually takes between five and 10 years. The AEA permits private ownership and operation of 1 nuclear power plants, 2 nuclear material manufacturing, and 3 transportation of nuclear materials. The federal government retained control of licensing and regulation to assure the common defense and security and to protect public health and safety. The AEA has been amended several times. In , Congress added protections for whistle-blowing employees against employer retaliation. This is a legal phrase which means that the test for state law constitutionality is whether it concerns any matter over which the NRC has regulatory authority, except in the limited areas where power has been expressly given to the states. In practical terms, this means that states are prohibited from enacting laws concerning safety from radiological harm. States may not regulate nuclear safety issues, but they are allowed to inspect the facility as the NRC deems appropriate. Illinois, for example has three MOUs. Another permits the state to inspect packaging of low-level nuclear waste. Other states similarly are given authority to inspect either reactors or transportation packaging under such MOUs or agreements. Massachusetts was the most recent addition; it just received its certification in March Under these agreements, states assume responsibility for regulating the nuclear safety of industrial, academic, and medical licensees that use small amounts of nuclear material. Obtaining agreement status involves the following process: Entering an agreement with NRC has fiscal implications because the NRC does not provide funds for states to establish an agreement program, nor can it pay for state program operating funds. In addition, states must reimburse the NRC for training, travel, and technical assistance. Under any agreement the NRC resumes control over licensees in emergencies. It also retains the power to cancel the agreement under certain circumstances. The DEP is responsible for responding to any nuclear incidents whether they arise from nuclear power plants or from industrial, academic, or medical licensees. Therefore, the NRC gives DEP complete access to plant operations and any facility housing nuclear materials so it can prepare for emergency responses.

Chapter 4 : Oversight of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission - Energy and Commerce Committee

Oversight of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission December 13, 00 AM The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works will hold a full committee hearing entitled, "Oversight of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.".

Chapter 5 : Oversight of NRC Management and the Need for Legislative Reform - Energy and Commerce

The chair of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and two NRC commissioners testified at an oversight hearing for their agency. The witnesses answered a variety of questions on topics including.

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Chapter 6 : Nuclear Regulatory Commission - Wikipedia

Chairman Issa Hearing Preview Statement. This hearing will focus on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in the wake of reports that the NRC's Chairman has abused his office and mismanaged his responsibilities to the detriment of the commission's critical work.

Chapter 7 : Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Officials Testify Oversight Hearing

Nuclear Regulatory Commission Oversight The chair of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and two NRC commissioners testified at an oversight hearing for their User Created Clips from This Video.

Chapter 8 : Nuclear Regulatory Commission Policy and Governance Oversight | American Geosciences In

The Reactor Oversight Process is the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)'s program to inspect, measure, and assess the safety and security performance of operating commercial nuclear power plants, and to respond to any decline in their performance.

Chapter 9 : Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Officials Testify Oversight Hearing

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) keeps Congress fully and currently informed of the agency's regulatory activities. The NRC's Office of Congressional Affairs is the main conduit for NRC communications with Congress.