



NRC NEWS

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ALLISON M. MACFARLANE BECOMES 15th NRC CHAIRMAN

Dr. Allison M. Macfarlane, designated by President Obama as chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, was sworn in today as the 15th person chosen to lead the agency charged with regulating the civilian use of nuclear materials.

She will serve a term ending June 30, 2013.

“This is a singular honor. I am grateful to the President for nominating me and to the Senate for confirming my selection,” said Macfarlane after a small private ceremony attended by the agency’s other commissioners and several senior NRC staff.

“The agency faces multiple challenges. I look forward to working collegially with my fellow commissioners and the excellent, dedicated staff at the NRC to address these issues,” added Macfarlane, an expert in nuclear waste issues.

Macfarlane, 48, holds a doctorate in geology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Most recently she was an associate professor of environmental science and policy at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. She has held fellowships at Radcliffe College, MIT, and Stanford and Harvard Universities. From 1998-2000 she was a Social Science Research Fellow-MacArthur Foundation Fellow in International Peace and Security. She has served on National Academy of Sciences panels on nuclear energy and nuclear weapons issues.

From 2010 to 2012 she served on the Blue Ribbon Commission on America’s Nuclear Future, created by the Obama Administration to make recommendations about a national strategy for dealing with the nation’s high level nuclear waste. Her research has focused on environmental policy and international security issues associated with nuclear energy, especially the back-end of the nuclear fuel cycle. In 2006 MIT Press published a book she co-edited, *Uncertainty Underground: Yucca Mountain and the Nation’s High-Level Nuclear Waste*, which explored technical issues at the proposed waste disposal facility at Yucca Mountain, Nev.

Macfarlane is the third woman to serve as chair of the commission, the 33rd member to serve on the panel, and the only individual with a background in geology to serve on the commission.

Formed in 1975 when the Atomic Energy Commission was dissolved and its responsibilities divided between the independent NRC for nuclear regulation and the Energy Department for energy research and promotion, the agency is widely regarded as a world leader in nuclear regulation and one of the top places to work in the federal government. The NRC has about 4,000 employees in Rockville, Md., and four regional offices.

Macfarlane and her husband, a George Mason University professor of cultural studies and anthropology, live in Bethesda, Md. They have two children.

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