



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

August 9, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am submitting the fifth quarterly report related to the NRC's progress on certain licensing actions and right-sizing commitments as first directed in the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, and continued in the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018.

The Joint Explanatory Statement directed the Commission to report: 1) "the on-board strength of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, including any identified areas of critical skill shortages and targeted hiring strategies against these shortage areas"; 2) "actions taken to right-size the NRC in accordance with the recommendations of the Project Aim report, to include re-baselining assumptions and projection of FTEs and required budget authority"; 3) "progress to eliminate the backlog of pending licensing actions in the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation by 2017"; and 4) "progress to complete the licensing reviews of pending reactor license renewal applications (power and research reactors), combined license applications, early site permit applications, design certification applications, and uranium recovery applications (initial and renewal) against currently projected schedules."

The fiscal year (FY) 2018 staffing level in the agency's enacted appropriation is 3,186 FTE. NRC's current projection would utilize 3,077 FTE in 2018, which is approximately 150 FTE below the FY 2017 utilization. The FTE resources cited represent inclusion of the Office of the Inspector General resources.

Hiring of additional agency staff will continue to be limited to only those skills that are both critical to the agency operations and not available within the existing agency workforce. The NRC has identified additional skill needs in the areas of cybersecurity, cloud computing, probabilistic risk assessment, health physics, fuel technology, acquisitions, and advanced reactors (non-light water reactors); and is implementing strategies to mitigate any future critical skill gaps in these areas. These strategies include retraining and redeploying current agency staff, partnering with other Federal agencies, and supplementing the NRC workforce with contractor support.

The status of a variety of licensing activities as requested in the Joint Explanatory Statement is provided in Enclosure 1. The NRC continues to implement activities resulting from Project Aim, as described in Enclosure 2. Recent practice has been to provide quarterly updates for Project Aim tasks or related follow-on activities that have

recent accomplishments or challenges. For this quarterly update, Enclosure 2 provides an overview of all 19 tasks, in the interests of periodically providing broader context.

Please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Eugene Dacus, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776 if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Kristine L. Svinicki

Enclosures:

1. Progress on Licensing Applications – June 2018
2. Project Aim Status Update – April – June 2018

cc: Senator Patrick Leahy

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
cc: Senator Patrick Leahy

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
cc: Representative Nita Lowey