



CHAIRMAN

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

October 11, 2019

The Honorable Salud Carbajal
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Carbajal:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your September 5, 2019, letter expressing concerns about proposed changes to the NRC's Reactor Oversight Process (ROP) and requesting that the NRC hold a public comment period before any changes to the ROP are finalized.

Regarding your concern about the proposed changes to the ROP, the goal of the ROP improvement effort is to focus the NRC's inspection and oversight resources on the most safety significant issues. Rest assured, as the Commission considers the proposed changes to the ROP, the NRC is maintaining a robust inspection program that includes full-time resident inspectors at every operating reactor facility, routine and special inspections staffed by specialists from NRC headquarters and our four regional offices, as well as additional focused inspections that might be required for licensees that have exhibited degraded performance.

In short, the current ROP is effective. Based on an analysis performed by NRC staff, there was unanimous agreement that the safety performance for the nuclear industry has improved since the inception of the ROP. That said, considering enhancements is prudent given that the program is 20 years old and we now have many years of operational experience and inspection data to support possible improvements.

The NRC agreed that it would be beneficial to seek additional public comment. On August 7, 2019, the NRC staff announced a 60-day period for the public to comment on the recommendations in SECY-19-0067, as well as on other possible long-term changes to the ROP that the staff is currently evaluating. Following the end of the public comment period on October 7, 2019, any comments received will be forwarded to the Commission for its consideration. This public comment period was in addition to the staff's significant outreach efforts on the proposed ROP changes, which are aimed at better aligning the agency's inspection and oversight resources with the most safety-significant issues. Links to documents, presentations, and meeting summaries associated with the NRC staff assessment of the ROP are located on a dedicated page of the NRC's public website.

Independent of the current proposed ROP changes, the NRC hosts monthly public meetings to solicit stakeholder feedback and discuss the status of the ROP. These meetings continue and are conducted at NRC headquarters with a teleconference option for those unable to attend in person and are Category 2 meetings that invite the public to participate at designated points in the agenda to discuss regulatory issues, ask questions and provide comments. The public meeting schedule is located on the NRC's public website.

We appreciate your interest in these matters. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me or have your staff contact Eugene Dacus, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'KLS', is positioned above the printed name.

Kristine L. Svinicki