



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

June 17, 2020

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 report for the second quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 related to the NRC's progress on certain licensing actions and right-sizing commitments consistent with the direction first included in the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, and continued in Senate Report 116-102 accompanying the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020.

The Joint Explanatory Statement directed the Commission to report on the following: 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 and test reactors), combined license applications, early site permit applications, design certification applications, and uranium recovery applications (initial and renewal) against currently projected schedules."

To reflect the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020, the FY 2020 staffing level in the agency's enacted appropriations has been adjusted to 2,979 FTE from 2,991 FTE. The NRC currently projects utilizing 2,810 FTE, which would be approximately 111 FTE below the FY 2019 utilization. The FTE resources cited include the Office of the Inspector General resources.

Since FY 2014, the NRC's workforce has declined considerably, from 3,741 to 2,979 FTE, to adjust for changes in workload. Hiring of additional agency staff has been limited to only those skills that are critical to the agency operations or not available within the existing agency workforce. The NRC implemented a Strategic Workforce Planning process to improve our efforts in developing and managing the NRC workforce and to balance near-term work with long-term staffing projections. The process projects the amount and type of work anticipated over the next 5 years and identifies the skills needed in the workforce to perform that work. Through this process, both short- and long-term strategies are developed to inform the agency's efforts to recruit, retain, and develop a skilled and diverse workforce with the competencies and agility to address both current and emerging needs and workload fluctuations. Given the

projected attrition over the next 5 years, this process will help us to avoid skills gaps and to ensure that NRC is appropriately staffed to carry out our safety mission into the future.

Shortly before the completion date for this reporting period, the NRC began taking precautionary measures in response to the declared public health emergency (PHE) in the United States in response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). These measures balance the health and safety of our workforce in accordance with guidance provided by the Federal Government, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as State and local authorities, with the actions necessary to carry out NRC's critical safety mission. Preparatory activities included determining how to modify resident inspectors' presence at reactors and fuel cycle facilities in a way that maintains NRC's oversight and inspection regime while minimizing their risk of exposure to the virus. Additionally, on March 28, 2020, the agency issued a notification to nuclear power reactor licensees explaining the process by which the NRC staff will be prepared to conduct expedited reviews of licensees' requests for exemptions from the work hour controls in accordance with the NRC's regulations. The NRC staff held public meetings via webinar to further explain and answer questions from stakeholders. Other impacts to NRC activities during this reporting period were minimal and, where appropriate, are discussed in Enclosure 1. Future reports will include additional details on NRC activities resulting from or impacted by the COVID-19 PHE and the agency's response, including the Commission's decision to temporarily defer fees to mitigate the financial impact on licensees.

The status of licensing activities is provided in Enclosure 1. The NRC's continued activities resulting from Project Aim are described in Enclosure 2.

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

Sincerely,



Kristine L. Svinicki

Enclosures:

1. Progress on Licensing Applications
2. Project Aim Status Update

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 Nita Lowey
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
cc: Representative Kay Granger