

OPENING STATEMENT FOR SEN. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

EPW Clean Air and Nuclear Safety Subcmte. Hearing:
“Enabling Advanced Reactors and a Legislative Hearing on S.2795:
“the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act.”

Wednesday, April 21th, 2016

- I’d like to welcome all of our witnesses today, but a particular welcome to an alumnus of this Committee, Mr. Merrifield, who worked as staff here years ago.
- Each witness has been asked to give a 5-minute oral statement and then take questions.
- We are here to examine an exciting topic: advanced nuclear reactors. While nuclear issues may be somewhat new to me, I am learning that these technologies have the potential to make great strides in advancing nuclear technology.
- This is a topic I know Sen. Carper has been following for some time and I can see why. I’m glad he asked for this hearing and I am eager to hear from our witnesses today.
- Nuclear energy is an essential component of our all-of-the-above energy strategy.
- Our current nuclear plants provide clean, safe, reliable, and affordable energy to power economy while providing thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in benefits to local communities.
- They have made vital contributions to our energy security for years, but we need to look forward to what comes next.
- Advanced reactors have the potential to be cleaner, safer, and more secure.
- One purpose for this hearing is to better understand these technologies and the barriers to their development as commercial energy sources.

- The other purpose of this hearing is to examine S.2795, the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act, introduced last week by my colleagues; Senators Inhofe, Booker, Whitehouse, and Crapo.
- S. 2975 directs the NRC to develop a regulatory framework under which license applications for a variety of technologies can be reviewed, in keeping with the NRC's safety and security mission.
- The NRC's existing regulations were designed around one technology and are not well-suited to the innovations that are underway. This is clearly an issue our Committee needs to address and I'm glad my colleagues have come forward with a solution.
- Efficient and timely decision making at the NRC is crucial for our existing plants and for emerging technologies.
- The bill modernizes the NRC's budget and fee structure to ensure funds are available to complete reviews that the existing industry needs to remain economically competitive and that will also allow emerging technologies to grow.
- The NRC's safety and security mission is a vital one, but must be accomplished efficiently and with fiscal discipline.
- According to the NRC's Principles of Good Regulation:

The American taxpayer, the rate-paying consumer, and licensees are all entitled to the best possible management and administration of regulatory activities.

- This bill aligns with that Principle and I thank my colleagues for their hard work and bipartisanship to advance innovative new energy technologies.

- These are technologies where our nation should lead the way, not just for our energy security but also in the interest of national security. Only by leading can we hope to advance our nonproliferation goals.
- With that, I'm eager to hear Sen. Carper's remarks and those of our witnesses.

(To close the hearing)

- Since this is a legislative hearing and we expect Committee action on S.2795 next week, I'm asking Committee staff to provide questions regarding the bill to the Majority office by 4:00 PM tomorrow, Friday, April 22. Witnesses are asked to respond in writing by 5:00 PM on Monday, April 25th.
- All questions for the record regarding the general topic of advanced reactors will be due within the usual two week deadline.
- (to the witnesses) Thank you for coming to testify and share your views. This hearing is adjourned.