

**Statement of Commissioner David A. Wright
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
December 1, 2021**

Good morning Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, and members of the committee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear today. First, I'd like to thank my colleagues for their insights into the matters before the Commission and to the Chairman for his leadership during these challenging times. I hope that the next time we appear before you, we will be a full complement, because we work best with five Commissioners.

Thanks to the efforts of our COVID task force, we began reentry on November 7th. This gives us the opportunity to collaborate in person again, as well as meet employees who onboarded while we were on fulltime telework. That in-person interaction helps us meet our mission in the most effective way possible.

There are many exciting things happening at the NRC, including advanced reactor applications under review, the Part 53 rulemaking efforts, subsequent license renewal applications, digital I & C, accident tolerant fuel application reviews, and the decommissioning rulemaking. In these and in all matters, my focus and the staff's focus is safety.

There have been recent media statements and social media posts regarding NRC decisions and rulemakings suggesting that the staff's recommendations are not safe or simply reflect the industry viewpoint, including on the proposed decommissioning rule. For the record, I do not agree with those statements.

Our staff members are committed professionals dedicated to meeting the NRC's safety mission. As you know, our safety mission is apolitical, as are the NRC's Principles of Good Regulation. The staff's findings in the matters before the NRC are based on data, expertise, and experience, and are informed by input from external stakeholders.

At times, the staff is not unanimous in its recommendations, but processes are in place to ensure that all staff perspectives, including differing views, are considered before making recommendations to the Commission. While there may be different policy views on those recommendations, each recommendation staff provides the Commission meets the NRC's safety mission. I make sure I understand each of these points of view, as well as my colleagues' perspectives, before reaching a decision. I'd like to thank the staff for its unwavering focus and dedication to the shared goal of the Commission, the staff, and our licensees: the safe and secure civilian use of radioactive materials.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.