

Statement of Jeffery M. Baran
Committee on Environment and Public Works
September 9, 2014

Chairman Boxer, Ranking Member Vitter, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear today before the Environment and Public Works Committee. I am honored to have been nominated by President Obama to serve on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

I want to thank the Senator for his kind introduction. I also want to thank my wife Michelle, our three-year-old daughter Mia, and our newborn son Gus.

It is a pleasure to be here with my fellow nominee, Steve Burns. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Steve, as well as Chairman Macfarlane and Commissioners Svinicki and Ostendorff.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission regulates 100 commercial nuclear reactors operating in 31 states. These reactors generate about 20% of the electricity in the United States, providing low-carbon, baseload power. NRC also oversees dozens of research and test reactors, thousands of nuclear materials licenses, and other fuel cycle facilities, such as uranium recovery sites, enrichment facilities, and fuel fabrication facilities.

NRC has the vital mission of protecting public health and safety, promoting the common defense and security, and protecting the environment. That mission has never been more important. The Commission is implementing lessons learned from the Fukushima accident. Five new reactors are being built while five older reactors are retiring. And the Commission is facing a range of other challenging licensing and policy matters.

If confirmed, I would approach the issues before the Commission with an open mind and a collegial attitude. My approach is to hear from all interested parties, understand the facts, and then work to find solutions with broad support. I am proud of my track record of working with my Democratic and Republican colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee staff, as well as a range of stakeholders, to develop bipartisan legislation that gets enacted into law. During the last few years, I played a significant role in negotiating bills that have become law with overwhelming bipartisan support, including the pipeline safety bill and bills on energy efficiency, hydropower, and medical isotopes. I welcome the opportunity to bring my demonstrated consensus-building approach to the Commission.

If confirmed, I believe that my policymaking and legal experience would be an asset to the Commission. On the Energy and Commerce Committee staff, one of my primary areas of responsibility has been oversight of NRC. I have worked on a range of NRC issues over the years, including new reactor licensing, existing reactor oversight and decommissioning, high-level waste and low-level waste, imports of nuclear material and exports of nuclear technology, and uranium mining, milling, and enrichment issues.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of being briefed by NRC's senior managers and technical staff on numerous occasions. If confirmed, I look forward to continue working with these highly-skilled professionals and benefitting from their insights and expertise.

After working for Congress for more than a decade, I have a deep respect for the importance and value of Congressional oversight. If confirmed, I will do everything I can to ensure that the Committee has the information it needs to meet its oversight responsibilities.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.