Statement of Matthew J. Marzano

Nominee to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

before the

U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

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Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, and Members of the Environment and Public Works Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am both honored and humbled to have been nominated by President Biden to serve as a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

I want to thank you, Chairman Carper, for your kind introduction. It has been the privilege of my lifetime to serve you and the Members of this committee.

I also want to recognize my mother Mara and father Mark, who taught me the values that have guided me throughout my life. I must also acknowledge my grandmother, Elaine Waxman. She taught me to aim higher and to not waste the gifts and privileges that life has bestowed on me. Lastly, I want to recognize my son Silas and my wife Jennifer. Jenn has inspired me from the day I met her with the strength of her convictions. Her unwavering support of me and our family are why I am able to sit before you today. Thank you, Jennifer.

My interest in the sciences began early in life. Discussions about physics and the way the world works with my grandfather Ronald Waxman, an electrical engineer who could fix anything, were some of the fondest memories from my childhood. As a 10-year-old, of course, much of the knowledge he tried to impart flew well above my comprehension. Nonetheless, these talks inspired me to pursue scientific study with passion and curiosity.

It is because of his example and guidance that I pursued a degree in nuclear engineering to understand how to make practical use of the basic elements of the universe. I learned then, as I believe now, that safely managed nuclear energy has an important role to play in the nation's and the world's energy mix. Through my studies I became captivated by the unique applications of nuclear energy not only for carbon-free electricity generation but also for its potential to decarbonize hard-to-abate sectors.

After completing my degree, I joined the Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory, one of the nation's two facilities dedicated to the Navy's Nuclear Propulsion Program. There, I trained alongside the Navy's finest sailors to become a civilian instructor, engineer, and operator implementing the nuclear Navy's training mission. Executing that mission required me to internalize and uphold

the rigorous, safety-focused standards that define reactor operating excellence, and instill this mindset in my students.

I later found that the same safety principles underpinning the Navy's nuclear program carried over into the commercial nuclear industry. As a Senior Reactor Operator candidate at the V.C. Summer nuclear project in South Carolina, I observed the complexities of managing first-of-a-kind nuclear projects and the importance of proactive engagement between the NRC and licensees. I witnessed how this engagement can drive timely resolution of regulatory issues that arise during the design and construction phase of new reactors.

After the V.C. Summer project was canceled, I earned my Senior Reactor Operator license at the Braidwood Generating Station in Illinois. A Senior Reactor Operator license carries with it the responsibility to protect public health and safety and the environment and to navigate the intricate relationship between nuclear power operations and regulatory compliance. My understanding of this relationship provides me with a practical perspective to apply in regulatory decision-making and policy discussions. That experience also gave me first-hand insight into the management of aging nuclear reactors and cemented for me the importance of a well-trained and well-resourced nuclear workforce to maintain the safety of our nation's nuclear facilities.

I joined the Environment and Public Works Committee as an American Association for the Advancement of Science congressional fellow in 2022, and continued serving as a detailee from the Idaho National Laboratory after my fellowship. During my time with the committee, I've learned from experts in energy and climate policy while advancing the committee's priorities pertaining to nuclear safety matters and oversight of the NRC. This included advising the Chairman on the ADVANCE Act and working both across the aisle and with our House colleagues to reach agreement on differing views. I benefitted from the bipartisan collaboration and learned much from the minority staff of this committee and our counterparts in the House. I thank them for their patience and hard work on this successful effort.

If confirmed, my approach as a Commissioner would reflect the mandate imposed on all nuclear professionals across the country – to prioritize public health and safety. This is because the benefits that nuclear energy can provide to society require the public's trust and confidence in the NRC's decision-making. I would seek to foster collaboration and collegiality among my fellow Commissioners to produce durable policy that minimizes regulatory uncertainty and maximizes efficiency. I would also work to ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to bring their concerns before the agency and have a voice in NRC matters.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I look forward to answering your questions.