

STATEMENT OF ANNIE CAPUTO
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
June 8, 2022

Thank you, Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, and Members of the Committee. After having worked this Committee for several years, I can't help but feel nostalgic to be back in this room, albeit in a different capacity.

I am grateful to President Biden for nominating me to serve on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and honored to appear before you today. Nearly five years ago, this Committee reported my nomination with strong bipartisan support. It was then -- and still is -- humbling to be considered for such a serious responsibility. I hope to earn the Committee's confidence again. Chairman Carper and Ranking Member Capito, I particularly want to thank you for your continued support.

I also want to thank my family. Without their support, I wouldn't be here. AJ, my husband of 24 years, has been a constant champion of my public service. Our son and daughter, Owen and Abigail, have grown a lot since I came before you five years ago and continue to be our greatest blessings.

During my career, I have seen the fate of nuclear energy wax and wane more than I ever imagined as a nuclear engineering student. In 1996, when I graduated from the University of Wisconsin, nuclear energy was struggling to be economically viable, and plants were closing prematurely. Ten years later, there was a renaissance that led to license applications filed at the NRC for 31 new reactors. Then the renaissance waned, resulting in only two reactors being built and the industry returning to early shutdowns. Now, considerable momentum has grown in support of Small Modular Reactors and advanced reactors.

This Committee has demonstrated strong bipartisan support for advanced reactors, and I recognize the sense of urgency driven by climate change and energy security concerns. These innovative designs offer a range of benefits including improved safety and economics and may become a significant source of clean energy for our country and the world. Safety comes first, not only because it's the agency's mandate to protect public health and safety, but also because it is a predicate to the societal benefits of advanced reactors. Any design must first be proven safe before the economic viability of deployment can reasonably be tested.

NRC's role as gatekeeper to the future of advanced reactors is a role that this Committee and the agency both take very seriously. That is a perspective that I share and, if confirmed, I

would work collegially with my fellow commissioners to build consensus as the agency proceeds with regulating these innovative technologies.

I have also seen the impressive expertise and professionalism of the NRC staff in action. After all, they are the reason why the NRC is considered the gold standard for nuclear safety the world over. I have no doubt the staff can meet the challenge of advanced reactors while continuing to ensure the safe operation of existing nuclear facilities and materials users.

In summary, if confirmed, I will endeavor to serve in a manner worthy of your confidence, the public's trust, and in keeping with NRC's Mission, Principles, and Values.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear today and look forward to your questions.