

OPENING STATEMENT FOR SEN. INHOFE

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 21<sup>th</sup>, 2016

- I have been a strong supporter of nuclear energy since I became chair of this Subcommittee almost 20 years ago. It is a vital source of clean, safe, and affordable energy which helps power this machine called America.
- Our existing nuclear plants have run safely for decades and will operate for years to come. However, I believe we also need to look to the future.
- Innovation has come to the nuclear industry. There are many new companies, nuclear “start-ups” in fact, that are pursuing concepts that advance safety, security, and efficiency.
- I strongly support this progress and am eager to see these innovators succeed.
- That is why I joined my colleagues -- Senators Booker, Whitehouse, and Crapo – to introduce the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act.
- Advanced reactor innovators must have an efficient regulatory process at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in order to bring these new technologies into operation.

- The NRC’s existing processes were designed around one particular technology: light-water reactors. These processes are poorly suited for the wide range of advanced technologies currently being pursued.
- Our bill directs NRC to develop “technology-inclusive” regulatory processes in an effort to enable the growth of the new, exciting industry.
- Our section to modernize NRC fees reflects oversight work done by the EPW Committee over the last few years.
- One need that is shared between advanced reactor innovators and existing reactor operators is the need for timely decision making from the NRC.
- Our bill directs the NRC to budget for industry-requested work and to preserve those funds solely for those purposes to improve the NRC’s timeliness.
- Altogether, these provisions represent a solid, bipartisan effort to modernize the cost and regulatory frameworks and enable the development of new generations of reactors with bold new technologies.
- Other countries like China and Russia are proceeding to develop advanced technologies regardless of what we do here in the U.S. We cannot forgo advancements in reactor technology or we forgo our economic competitiveness and worldwide influence on nuclear non-proliferation.

- We need to enable advanced reactor innovators by providing a regulatory framework that is predictable and cost-effective while maintaining the NRC's safety and security mission. This bill does that.
- In a time when people question whether Congress still knows how to be bipartisan, this bill is proof that we can find common ground and craft important solutions to benefit the nation.
- This legislation was the product of teamwork with my friends, Senators Booker, Whitehouse, and Crapo. I'm proud to be part of that team.