

Statement of Christopher T. Hanson
Nominee to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
before the
U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

April 17, 2024

Good morning, Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, and members of the Committee. It is a privilege to appear before you today.

Thank you, Senator Stabenow, for your kind words of introduction. And thank you for your very distinguished career in service to the people of Michigan and the country.

Mr. Chairman, please allow me to introduce my family members seated behind me – my wife, Anne; Andrew, our middle son and a sophomore at Washington College; my mother, Linda, who traveled from Michigan to be here today, and my father-in-law, George Ellestad. Two of our boys, Sam and Theo, couldn't join us. Sam, our oldest, is serving in the United States Army at Fort Sam Houston; and Theo, our youngest, a junior in high school, lucked out and is on a school field trip to Orlando. I want to express my gratitude to them and to the rest of my family for their unwavering support.

I want to take a moment to remember my former boss on the Appropriations Committee, Senator Dianne Feinstein, who introduced me to this Committee at my confirmation hearing in March of 2020. As you know, she passed away last September. One of the things I most admired was her pragmatism—her constant drive to make a difference and get things done. That's what makes her a role model for me and what I strive for in my time at the NRC.

I am deeply honored to be renominated by President Biden; I am humbled and grateful for his confidence in my ability to continue serving the American people as Chair of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

I also want to sincerely thank the hardworking and dedicated staff of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission who tirelessly work to fulfill our mission to regulate the civilian use of nuclear material and to protect the public health and safety and the environment.

I am proud of the accomplishments of the NRC staff and my Commission colleagues over the past four years ushering in a new era at the agency. These include:

- Paving the way for a technology-inclusive framework to license new and advanced reactors;
- Charting a path for regulating fusion energy systems;

- Licensing the first non-light water reactor in the U.S. in over 50 years;
- Efficiently overseeing the addition of 2500 MW of new nuclear generation at the Vogtle Plant in Georgia; and
- Strengthening America's leadership role abroad as a reliable partner to embarking nuclear nations seeking national and energy security.

During my tenure at the NRC, I have embraced building a culture of trust and confidence both internally and externally. As the NRC becomes even more proficient in applying risk-information and making further efficiencies in our licensing reviews and decisions, we must continue to uphold our commitments to the American public.

There is more work still to be done. If confirmed by the Senate, I pledge to continue leading the agency in tackling the challenges ahead for both the existing fleet of reactors and next-generation nuclear technologies while upholding the agency's critical safety and security mission.

I believe the NRC can adapt to a dynamic landscape where new and existing nuclear technologies will play a greater role in our energy future. We can pursue excellence and exercise safety oversight without sacrificing timeliness and effectiveness. We can build on the tremendous expertise this agency has built over its nearly 50-year legacy by staying true to our principles of good regulation: independence, openness, efficiency, clarity, and reliability. We can and will anticipate the changes ahead and rise to meet them.

If confirmed, I commit to working with my colleagues on the Commission and leading the NRC staff into the next chapter of the agency's long and distinguished history.

Thank you, Senators, for your consideration of my nomination, and I welcome your questions.