STATEMENT OF HO K. NIEH, JR.
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
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Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I also thank Senator Britt for her kind introduction and support.

I would like to recognize and appreciate my wife, Kerry. For nearly 30 years, she has been a constant source of love and encouragement. I would also like to recognize our daughters, Hunter and Cameron, and my parents, Katherine and Ho Nieh Sr., for their support.

I am honored to have been nominated by President Trump to serve on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

My career in nuclear energy spans more than 32 years, including 23 years at the NRC, where I began as a resident inspector and advanced through a wide range of leadership roles. My desire to return reflects my appreciation for the NRC's safety mission and its dedicated workforce. I am grateful for the trust the NRC placed in me and the opportunities it gave me to grow as a leader.

Today, America's demand for electricity is soaring—driven by artificial intelligence, data centers and economic growth. Nuclear energy is increasingly seen as a safe and reliable solution to help meet this demand. The NRC's work is essential to our Nation's welfare and energy security through safely expanding the capacity and lifetime of America's existing reactor fleet and timely licensing of new nuclear power plants.

The NRC is at a critical crossroads. What worked well 50 years ago may not meet today's needs. The ADVANCE Act and Executive Order 14300 are roadmaps for improvements and reform. If confirmed, I will work to ensure they are effectively implemented in ways that strengthen the NRC's credibility and public trust.

The NRC is capable of change. From 2018 to 2021, I served as the Director of the NRC's Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. During that time, we improved and streamlined licensing and oversight programs using risk-informed approaches. We modernized business tools to increase accountability and efficiency. Our aim was to focus the NRC's resources on what matters most for safety.

Perhaps more importantly, we embarked on a culture change to become a more enabling and innovative regulator without compromising safety. We embraced a new vision statement for the NRC's reactor safety program, which was: "We make SAFE use of nuclear technology POSSIBLE." This statement emphasized the safety and enabling elements of the Atomic Energy Act and served as our shared sense of purpose.

As I was leaving the agency, a senior NRC scientist shared with me that he initially had reservations about this new sense of purpose, but over time he came to believe it struck the right balance between safety and innovation. What encouraged me most was when he said that

after three decades with the agency, he felt more energized about the NRC's work than ever before. That shared sense of purpose and renewed energy are what I commit to building if confirmed—especially since the NRC recently updated its mission statement to include both safety and enabling.

In addition to my years at the NRC, I had the privilege of working in the international nuclear community and the electric utility industry. These experiences gave me broader perspectives on how other regulators and organizations pursue safety—perspectives I believe can help the NRC adapt to today's challenges.

If confirmed, I will be an advocate for safety and the NRC's Principles of Good Regulation—Independence, Openness, Efficiency, Clarity and Reliability. I hope to have this opportunity to work with the current members of the Commission and the dedicated staff of the NRC.

Thank you again for this opportunity to meet with you. I look forward to your questions.