



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. 05-026

February 10, 2005

NRC TESTIFIES ON ENERGY POLICY ACT OF 2003 BEFORE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission believes enacting nuclear-related provisions of H.R. 6, the Energy Policy Act of 2003, would be a significant step forward for the protection of public health and safety and the common defense and security, a top agency official told the House Committee on Energy and Commerce today.

“Some of the provisions in the bill are the most important nuclear security proposals related to commercial nuclear activities that have been placed before Congress,” said Luis Reyes, the NRC’s Executive Director for Operations. “This legislation would also assist NRC in evaluating license applications for new nuclear facilities.”

Reyes went on to outline significant actions the NRC has taken since the 2001 terrorist attacks to improve security at the facilities it regulates. He described increased physical security at nuclear power plants requiring, among other measures, stricter site access controls and enhanced mock adversary force exercises, as well as enhanced communication with the intelligence community and improved coordination with federal, state and local organizations responsible for protecting the nation’s critical infrastructure.

Reyes strongly supported a specific section of H.R. 6 for containing provisions that would allow the NRC to authorize guards at nuclear power plants to have and use more powerful weapons against violent attacks, and would criminalize certain activities such as bringing dangerous weapons into and sabotaging the construction of nuclear facilities. Reyes also pointed out provisions the NRC considers superfluous because the commission has already addressed them or because the provisions don’t promise greater security than already achieved.

“The commission would welcome the prompt enactment of many H.R. 6 provisions that relate to commercial use of radioactive material since they would assist the NRC in its efforts to further ensure the adequate protection of public health and safety, and the common defense and security,” Reyes said.

The written testimony will be available at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/congress-docs/congress-testimony/2005/> . For additional information on the enhancements to nuclear safety since 9/11, go to <http://www.nrc.gov> .

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