

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 15, 2023

The Honorable Christopher Hanson
Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C., 20555-0001

Dear Chairman Hanson:

I write with optimism and hope that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Office of Inspector General (OIG), notwithstanding any prior or future legislative action, craft and distribute an anonymous, optional survey to select NRC personnel. In furtherance of the United States' goal of being a global nuclear leader, I believe that the distribution of such a survey will ultimately improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the agency—without subjecting NRC employees to potential repercussions for participating and sharing their honest thoughts about how improve certain antiquated regulatory methods and processes.

For background, I introduced H.R. 9351—the NRC Survey Act—in the 117th Congress. This bill had five bipartisan cosponsors and received great feedback from the nuclear community at large. Although this crucial piece of legislation didn't receive a vote on the House or Senate floor, I believe anonymous responses to the inquiries laid out in the NRC Survey Act would greatly benefit the innerworkings of the NRC and subsequently improve the nuclear industry as a whole. Also for your awareness, I recently reintroduced H.R. 1006—the NRC Survey Act—and have the intention of passing it with overwhelming bipartisan support in both chambers.

There's a simple reason why I respectfully request the NRC OIG voluntarily craft and distribute an optional, anonymous survey to certain NRC employees. The time is now to enact meaningful policy change to optimize the functions of the NRC—especially with the expected future influx of fission and fusion reactor applications—and I ultimately believe it would be in the best wellbeing of Congress to receive responses to the targeted inquires listed in H.R. 1006 as soon as possible. In my opinion, receiving personal responses from NRC staff themselves about the following nuclear areas would greatly assist congress' upcoming nuclear-related actions throughout the 118th Congress: (a) public outreach and engagement; (b) risk-informed, performance-based licensing review; (c) unnecessary, outdated, and unduly burdensome laws or regulations; (d) subsequent license renewals; (e) the need for legislative clarity on certain terms and definitions; (f) NRC staff experience and preparation for reviewing advanced nuclear reactors; (g) redefining the NRC's mission statement and mandate to promote both safety and innovation; (h) using artificial intelligence to improve the NRC's daily functions; (I) learning from the methods and processes of other foreign governmental agencies that oversee nuclear energy; etc.

While I call on congress to quickly pass the NRC Survey Act in the 118th Congress, I simultaneously write today to ask that the NRC OIG voluntarily craft and distribute an anonymous, optional survey to certain NRC employees in accordance with H.R. 1006. Congress should hear from NRC officials themselves about how to improve their own agency, and I believe this voluntary effort in crafting and distributing the survey would be a worthwhile endeavor for the NRC OIG. If our country is to be prepared for the next Nuclear Renaissance, we must hold federal employees to the highest standards to ensure the federal government—specifically the NRC—is operating at full capacity with a successful strategy to combat the challenges of the future. Let's hear from the experts, embrace agency change, and promote nuclear innovation by modernizing certain antiquated NRC policies.

Sincerely,



Byron Donalds
Member of Congress