

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
Hearing on “The NRC FY 2015 Budget and Policy Issues”
May 7, 2014**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

I appreciate the commissioners returning to the committee today. Chairman Macfarlane, I am also pleased that you will be returning to southwest Michigan in the coming weeks.

Nuclear energy is an indispensable source of clean, reliable, affordable power. However, economic headwinds are challenging the viability of some plants, with four closing last year and more to follow.

Budgets are statements of policy. The NRC budget for fiscal year 2015 shows an increase in resources and staffing despite a shrinking fleet of reactors. This will no doubt be a topic of conversation today as we look at the short- and long-term plans for the agency and realistic expectations for funding levels.

The NRC's gold standard for nuclear safety oversight is essential and something I strongly support. I believe the NRC has appropriately responded to Fukushima with several new requirements addressing Tier One issues – the most safety-significant issues like the station blackout scenario and seismic hazard re-evaluations.

As the NRC turns its attention to Tiers Two and Three, I think it is appropriate for the agency to assess the safety benefits that will be realized by the implementation of the actions already taken and view these other, less safety-significant items accordingly. It is incumbent upon the NRC to ensure meaningful safety benefits warrant any further requirements.

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