

WRITTEN STATEMENT
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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
TO THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE
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Chairman Sessions, Ranking Member Mfume, Chairman Comer, Ranking Member Raskin, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. I'm Dan Dorman, the Executive Director for Operations at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). The NRC is an independent Federal agency with a mission to license and regulate the civilian use of radioactive materials to provide adequate protection of public health and safety, promote the common defense and security, and to protect the environment. Within the NRC, the Executive Director is responsible for overseeing the agency's operational and administrative functions and serves as the chief operating officer. I welcome the opportunity to discuss the telework policies and practices at our agency and their potential impact on agency mission accomplishment and operations.

Following declaration of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, on March 17, 2020, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued specific guidance for agencies to "immediately adjust operations and services to minimize face-to-face interactions" and possibly postpone or significantly curtail non-mission critical functions that required on-site or in-person interactions. In response to the OMB guidance, on March 19, 2020, the NRC swiftly implemented mandatory telework for all non-mission-critical functions, effective immediately, with the NRC's headquarters office and four regional offices, as well as our Technical Training Center (TTC),

remaining open and operational, enabling critical functions performed in an NRC facility to continue. More than a year later, on November 7, 2021, the NRC re-entered the workplace and transitioned from a maximum telework status to a hybrid work environment. After the NRC's re-entry, first-line supervisors were delegated the authority to approve up to six telework days per pay period, which required four in-person days per pay period. Due to changes with the COVID-19 environment, starting in December 2021, additional flexibilities for project-based telework were extended to the NRC staff for approximately 3 months.

Following re-entry, I tasked staff and senior leadership to study various telework options through what we called our Hybrid Environment Assessment and Review Team (HEART) and the Telework Policy and Implementation Working Group (TPIWG). These two groups issued reports that contained in-depth assessments and benchmarking into the practical and effective use of telework.

These reports have helped us assess how we achieve our mission in a hybrid work environment, including the impacts of telework on our agency's organizational health. We have metrics to monitor our organizational health and stakeholder confidence, in addition to continuing to monitor our safety and security objectives. We also evaluated, and continue to evaluate, the impact that our hybrid work environment has on space planning and allocation. These insights are playing a large role as we pursue new office space arrangements (i.e., hoteling) with our employees' union. Regardless, the NRC's strategic space plans consistently seek to reduce our footprint as appropriate. Since fiscal year 2019, which includes efforts undertaken prior to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, the NRC has reduced its Washington, D.C.-area headquarters office footprint by approximately 28%. This reduction is the result of following Federal Government-wide directives to reduce office space and to reflect NRC staff attrition.

In addition, the footprint in three of our four regional offices is expected to decrease by approximately 50% by the end of fiscal year 2025. This decrease is also the result of NRC staff attrition, as well as changing workspace design to use efficiencies afforded by telework. Furthermore, the NRC has implemented various network and communication enhancements to enable its staff to productively engage as a hybrid workforce effectively and securely. NRC teleworking employees have been provided a standard image Agency laptop with multiple security tools, including full-disk encryption, multi-factor authentication for secure authenticated access, and a full-time Virtual Private Network tool, which activates at initial access and encrypts network traffic. These solutions enable secure network access for our staff to agency technology and information assets and Federal records systems and repositories. The NRC has provided its staff with other information technology tools and resources, such as Microsoft 365, to facilitate close collaboration and communication whether an individual is working in the office or offsite.

The NRC met its safety and security objectives – even as the agency expanded telework and remote work during the public health emergency. The agency continues to meet its mission in the current hybrid work environment, focusing in-office time on those activities that benefit from an in-person presence. As we continue to adapt to our hybrid work environment, the NRC continues to focus on our important safety and security mission, and demonstrates our Principles of Good Regulation through effective, responsive, and timely regulatory actions, consistent with our organizational values and our open, collaborative work environment.

I appreciate the Subcommittee's interest in the NRC's mission and the work of our dedicated staff, who have continued to show resilience, agility, and dedication over the last few years as we navigated the changes to our workplace and how we accomplish our work. I look forward to your questions.

