

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.

Markup of 6 Bills, Subcommittee on Energy

July 14, 2026

Nuclear energy plays a critical part in delivering carbon-free power on our nation's power grid. In an era of increasing power demand, new nuclear facilities can provide clean energy to the power grid around the clock.

Unfortunately, when President Trump took office, he immediately launched an attack against the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), our nation's nuclear safety regulator, by inappropriately letting unaccountable DOGE workers from the Department of Energy to get involved in NRC business.

The attack continued a few weeks ago with a Supreme Court decision granting the President sweeping powers to fire our nation's nuclear safety cops on the beat at any time, for any reason.

This poses a serious risk, and it could imperil the nuclear industry in our country. At all three of our nuclear energy hearings this Congress, this Subcommittee has heard testimony about how vital it is that the NRC remain independent. We have heard testimony from the Secretary of Energy and the Chairman of the NRC itself that the NRC's independence is paramount. Unfortunately, Trump and his accomplices on the Supreme Court think they know better. I just hope the rest of us don't have to pay the price.

These actions jeopardize both the safety of our nation's nuclear industry and the public's perception that the industry is safe. And if the public loses confidence in nuclear power, then we will never build more nuclear power in this nation. It's that simple.

I have made clear that my support for nuclear legislation is contingent upon transparency and confidence in our nuclear safety regulators. For the moment, I am satisfied that the inclusion of Ranking Member Castor's bill, the Department of Energy Nuclear Transparency Act, combined with continued efforts from NRC Chairman Nieh to improve transparency, are sufficient to help us move forward today.

But I must emphasize that these commitments to transparency must be an ongoing process, and frankly, it is ridiculous that we had to raise the alarm in the first place.

I also want to be clear – even though the majority on the Supreme Court may have blessed the illegal firing of NRC commissioners, I certainly do not. If the Administration attempts to fire, or threatens to fire, another NRC commissioner, then Democratic support for

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nuclear legislation will evaporate. We will not let Trump endanger the safety of millions of Americans.

Turning to the specifics of the bills today, most are bipartisan efforts to increase nuclear transparency and improve the licensing process, and I look forward to supporting them.

But I do have concerns with H.R. 9613, which as currently drafted, would double down on the Trump Administration's attacks on the NRC's Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards. I do think there are ways to tweak the bill to address my concerns, and I appreciate the Republican majority's willingness to engage on those concerns.

I also believe there are some changes that can be made to H.R. 9612 to ensure that the bill is implemented as intended. I hope that we can continue to have productive conversations on these two bills ahead of any action in the full Committee.

Thank you, and I yield back the balance of my time.