



Committee: Senate Environment & Public Works Committee
Event: [Hearing to Examine the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget](#)
Date: May 13, 2026

Executive Summary: On May 13, 2026, the Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works (EPW) held a hearing to review the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) proposed budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2027. The hearing focused heavily on the ongoing NRC reorganization efforts and on *ADVANCE Act* and [Executive Order \(EO\) 14300](#) implementation. Members and commissioners raised concerns and commented on workforce attrition. Democrats cited concerns regarding political independence.

Member Toplines:

[Chair Shelley Moore Capito \(R-WV\)](#): Capito praised the NRC's implementation of the *ADVANCE Act* and EO 14300, emphasizing the need for faster and more efficient licensing without compromising safety. She highlighted the success of recent NRC reforms, including agency reorganization, updates to the reactor oversight process, and accelerated licensing timelines. Capito expressed support and enthusiasm for nuclear energy's potential to meet growing electricity demand.

*Ranking Member Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)*¹: Whitehouse praised the NRC's recent licensing and regulatory accomplishments, arguing the agency has demonstrated it can efficiently support advanced nuclear deployment while maintaining safety standards. He highlighted threats to the Commission's independence from the Trump administration, warning that efforts by the Department of Energy and White House officials to influence the NRC could undermine the agency's independence and public trust in nuclear safety oversight. Whitehouse also raised concerns about NRC staffing losses, arguing that as the Commission takes on more work, these losses could threaten the long-term success of the nuclear industry.

Witness Toplines:

[Ho Nieh, Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission](#): Nieh emphasized the ongoing modernization efforts under the *ADVANCE Act* and testified that the NRC's safety mission remains its top priority. He highlighted nuclear energy's role in meeting the growing energy demand driven by artificial intelligence and data centers, calling the resource "essential to our nation's energy security." Nieh framed regulatory predictability and efficiency as essential to reducing investment risk and enabling the deployment of nuclear technologies. He also acknowledged workforce attrition challenges, emphasizing ongoing work to recruit, retain, and develop employees.

¹ An opening statement for Ranking Member Whitehouse was not available at the time of this memo's distribution.

[David Wright, Commissioner, Nuclear Regulatory Commission](#): Wright highlighted recent successes of the NRC, including the completion of the [Part 53 final rulemaking](#) ahead of schedule and the implementation of the *ADVANCE Act*.

[Bradley Crowell, Commissioner, Nuclear Regulatory Commission](#): Crowell emphasized the NRC's role in positioning the U.S. as a global leader in advanced nuclear energy. However, he raised concerns around workforce attrition, the magnitude of work, and the short timeline for implementing EO 14300. He stressed that maintaining transparency is critical to sustaining both nuclear safety and the NRC's credibility.

[Matthew Marzano, Commissioner, Nuclear Regulatory Commission](#): Marzano emphasized that the NRC is undergoing one of the most significant reform periods in its history as it implements the *ADVANCE Act* and related EOs intended to accelerate nuclear deployment. He cautioned that aggressive timelines and pressure to move quickly could increase the risk of errors. Marzano stressed that the successful implementation of these reforms requires a well-resourced workforce and stakeholder engagement, as well as public comment.

[Douglas Weaver, Commissioner, Nuclear Regulatory Commission](#): Weaver emphasized the NRC's ongoing efforts to implement the *ADVANCE Act* and EO 14300 in a manner that maintains public trust while enabling expanded nuclear deployment. Weaver argued these reforms will position the NRC to become both a strong safety regulator and a more effective enabler of nuclear technologies.

Major Takeaways:

Domestic Fuel Supply:

- Sen. **Mark Kelly** (D-AZ) highlighted the national security challenges of the current Uranium supply chain. Noting that about 20 percent of enriched uranium comes from Russia. Kelly cited the *Prohibiting Russian Uranium Imports Act*, which bans Russian uranium imports by 2028, as necessary but leaves the U.S. with a supply gap. He emphasized the need for domestic uranium production and enrichment.

Workforce Challenges:

- Chair Capito referenced ongoing staffing issues at NRC, pointing to the staffing reductions requested in the commission's FY27 appropriations request, and commissioners cited ongoing staffing efforts.
- Sen. **Angela Alsobrooks** (D-MD) highlighted the critical role that the nuclear workforce plays in helping to meet growing energy demand, and asked commissioners what the NRC is doing to support nuclear workforce development. Commissioners pointed to ongoing programs and initiatives to support workforce development and attrition.

Political Independence:

- Ranking Member Whitehouse asked the commission about the lack of a public vote on the final adoption of a proposed regulation before or after the regulations are submitted by and returned to the NRC from the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. He

requested that the commission share a list of votes taken and all future votes with the committee.

- Whitehouse also criticized the opaque nature of the steering committee overseeing the implementation of EO 14300, raising concerns about who the committee reports to and how it is being held accountable.