



Samuel Lawrence Foundation Comment

Re: Zero-Based Regulating

Docket ID DOE-HQ-2025-0603-0001 | Federal Register Number 2026-10729 (May 29, 2026)

Submitted via www.regulations.gov

The Honorable Chris Wright

Secretary of Energy
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585

Re: Formal Administrative Comment

The Samuel Lawrence Foundation (“SLF”) respectfully submits this formal comment in response to the Department of Energy’s (“DOE”) Federal Register notice of May 29st, 2026, seeking to implement “Zero-Based Regulating.” We submit these comments pursuant to the invitation for comment stated in the notice and look forward to working with the NRC to ensure that nuclear guidance is efficient, effective, and safe.

Promulgating multiple sunset provisions for complex technical and administrative regulations across dozens of disparate CFR regulations is not feasible while providing certainty for the industry and safety for the public. While the intent is to accelerate review, the operational reality of processing dozens of complex regulatory impact analyses within a single calendar year is not in the best interest of the public, companies seeking firm guidance, or DOE staff that might enjoy sleeping every now and then.

If the Department is unable to complete the requisite cost-benefit reviews and public comment periods mandated by 10 CFR § 1061.101(d) prior to the sunset period, essential frameworks may be rendered paralyzed, hampering rather than accelerating industry.

This rule proposes many simultaneous changes, which without adequate public and expert input, cannot meaningfully form the basis of essential frameworks, especially the siting of a final spent nuclear fuel repository.



1. General Comments

Balancing regulatory obligations, like safety and cost, should be evaluated over time to make sure the DOE strikes the right balance for the public, but the hard reality of agency bandwidth limits that rate at which this process can take place in good faith. To find this balance, while complying with the sunset timeline across the identified CFR parts, DOE would require an impossible mobilization of personnel and resources to draft Requests for Information (RFIs), evaluate public comments, conduct cost-benefit analyses, and draft Final Determinations, all in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act (“APA”).

DOE is a formidable institution with some of the brightest minds on the planet, but the likelihood of meeting these operational demands, to the high standard to which you hold yourselves, is nearly zero. If an RFI process is delayed by interagency review or an overwhelming volume of public comments, the strict sunset will force regulations to expire before the DOE has formally concluded whether they should expire or change, potentially creating sudden regulatory vacuums in some of the most important frameworks.

We look forward to working with NRC on iterations of CFR 960 and urge prioritization of guidance in this vein that could accelerate the deployment of Nuclear Fuel Innovation Campuses and find a solution to all spent nuclear fuel once and for all. However, DOE should take the time to fully evaluate these complex changes, in line with best practices and in accordance with the APA.

Respectfully submitted,

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