



NEWS FROM

## Congressman Bobby L. Rush

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### Opening Remarks by the Honorable Bobby L. Rush, Ranking Member Subcommittee on Energy and Power at the

Joint Subcommittee on Energy and Power and the Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy  
Hearing: The Role of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in America's Energy Future."

WASHINGTON — “Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Chairman Jaczko, and all of the NRC commissioners for being here today.

“Although the devastating events that happened in Japan have been swept from the front pages in recent weeks, I can assure you that my constituents still have very real concerns regarding nuclear safety.

“With Illinois housing more nuclear reactors than any state in the country, my constituents want to be assured that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has in place common sense protocols for both mitigating risks of a nuclear disaster, as well as procedures to safeguard the public in the event that a disaster occurs.

“When I visited the Dresden Generating Station in Northern Illinois back in March, I learned that there were some very important distinctions in our nuclear safety protocols, as compared to Japan, but there were also some concerns raised that I look forward to addressing, here, today.

“I was pleased to learn that U.S. nuclear facilities have multiple backup systems in place, including in underground and offsite locations.

“However, I do have some concerns regarding the placement of NRC Resident Inspectors, and their closeness, in location and relationship, to the facility managers they are responsible for monitoring.

“While inspectors must have access to all key data and have the appropriate knowledge of the people running these facilities, I want to make sure that this familiarity does not lead to complacency or does not in any way cloud, their judgment, integrity or independence.

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“Additionally, in Illinois there are remote monitoring systems in place, both inside and outside of plants, that can quickly identify irregularities and alert officials in real time, which I believe should be replicated throughout the U.S.

“Another issue that will require a national solution is how and where we store the massive 72,000 tons of spent fuel rods that a recent AP report found are located at nuclear reactor facilities throughout the U.S.

“I am curious to get your expert opinions on whether storing these rods in wet pools or dry casks is the safer option for long term storage.

“And, should these rods be stored above ground or in secure underground casks to mitigate risks?

“And, finally, I also believe we must develop a comprehensive, long term solution for storing these spent fuel rods, as well a plan to secure transportation of these rods when a location is identified.

“While I believe nuclear power must be a vital part of our country’s overall energy portfolio, we must ensure that we have the best systems and practices in place to safeguard against an unforeseen nuclear accident and to prevent a widespread disaster like that which is still unfolding in Japan.

“My constituents in Illinois, as well as the broader American public, expect us to address these pressing issues.

“So, I look forward to discussing these issues more in depth with the commissioners during the questioning session.

“And with that I yield the balance of my time.”

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