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94 ORGANIZATIONS URGE SENATE TO REJECT POSSIBLE RE-NOMINATION OF KRISTINE SVINICKI TO NRC

GROUPS CITE CONSISTENT PATTERN OF SUPPORTING NUCLEAR INDUSTRY INTERESTS AT THE EXPENSE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY.

Ninety-four national, regional and local organizations and small businesses today urged the Senate Environment Committee to reject the possible re-nomination of Kristine Svinicki to a second term at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

In a letter sent to Senate Environment Committee Chair Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and Ranking Member James Inhofe (R-Okla.), the groups said that "...during her first term as an NRC Commissioner, Ms. Svinicki uniformly voted for nuclear industry interests at the expense of public health and safety."

For example, the letter noted that Ms. Svinicki was the only member of the Commission who voted against implementation of critical post-Fukushima safety reforms under a framework that would ensure they be considered necessary for "adequate protection" of nuclear reactors—a standard that would enhance NRC enforcement of the rules.

While many of Ms. Svinicki's other pro-industry votes were unfortunately supported by a majority of the Commissioners, often against the stance of NRC Chairman Greg Jaczko, the letter stated that "Ms. Svinicki's positions have been the most egregious and extreme of all."

Most of the groups signing the letter rarely take a public position on NRC nominees. But, as the letter states, "The March 2011 nuclear disaster at the U.S.-designed reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi site has brought a new level of public attention and scrutiny to the manifest dangers of nuclear power. The ability of U.S. nuclear reactors—23 of which are virtually identical to those at Fukushima Daiichi with a dozen more using the same design concept—to withstand earthquakes, loss-of-power situations and other challenges both natural and man-made is of critical importance."

“Fukushima is a clear warning that the regulatory standards of the past are not adequate,” said Michael Mariotte, executive director of Nuclear Information and Resource Service, which coordinated the letter. “The NRC’s mission is to protect the public health and safety, and Fukushima shows the need for higher safety standards. But Ms. Svinicki’s record over the past five years indicates she will neither challenge the nuclear power industry nor support reforms that might improve nuclear safety.”

“Nuclear power is an inherently dangerous technology. We need NRC Commissioners who understand that basic fact and will act accordingly. Ms. Svinicki has proven herself to not be that kind of Commissioner, and therefore she has not earned a second term. The American people deserve better,” added Mariotte.

President Obama has indicated he intends to re-nominate Ms. Svinicki for a second term at the NRC, over the opposition of some lawmakers, including Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders. However, this re-nomination has not yet taken place, thus the letter to the Senate was copied to President Obama as well. The groups signing the letter encouraged the White House to rethink its position and not move forward with the nomination.

Separately, more than 9,000 e-mails to the Senate have been sent in the past week by individuals opposed to a second term for Ms. Svinicki.

The letter with signers is available here:

<http://www.nirs.org/reactorwatch/licensing/svinickiboxerletter42712.pdf>

This press release is available here:

<http://www.nirs.org/reactorwatch/licensing/svinickipr43012.pdf>