

STATEMENT OF GEORGE APOSTOLAKIS
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
February 9, 2010

Chairman Boxer, Ranking Member Inhofe and Committee Members, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). I will first tell you a few things about myself and, then, I will offer a few thoughts about my role as a commissioner, if confirmed.

Before I start, I'd like to acknowledge the presence of my wife, Victoria.

I came to the United States from Greece in 1969 to get my PhD at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California. In 1973, I was granted the degree and joined the UCLA School of Engineering where I went through the ranks of assistant, associate and full professor. I became an American citizen in 1979. In 1995, I moved to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where I am currently professor of Nuclear Science and Engineering and professor of Engineering Systems. My broad research area is the development of models for risk assessment of large technological systems, primarily nuclear power plants. I have served on numerous peer review committees for risk assessments performed for the NRC, NASA, and national laboratories. I have received several awards from the American Nuclear Society

and the Society for Risk Analysis. I was elected to the National Academy of Engineering in 2007.

An important development in my career that is relevant to my nomination is my appointment to the NRC's Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) in 1995. This statutory committee advises the commissioners on technical matters related primarily to the safety of nuclear reactors. I chaired the ACRS in the period 2001-2002. I have been chairman of the subcommittee on Reliability and Probabilistic Risk Assessment continuously since 1995. At various times, I have also chaired the subcommittees on Human Factors and on Digital Instrumentation and Control. This experience has been very valuable to me. I have appreciated the dedication and professionalism of the NRC staff. I have also appreciated the value of conducting all ACRS meetings in public and interacting with all stakeholders. I have seen the diverse technical issues that the agency must deal with on a routine basis. I have also been afforded the opportunity to influence the staff's technical work. I am particularly proud of the contributions I made to the agency's efforts to risk-inform its regulations that led to the landmark Regulatory Guide 1.174 and to successful risk-informed initiatives such as the Risk-Informed In-Service Inspection program.

If confirmed, I look forward to applying my academic expertise as well as the experience from the ACRS to regulatory and policy matters before the Commission. However, I fully realize that the Commission's role is different from

that of the ACRS. If confirmed, I intend to commit myself to help the commission fulfill its mission to "license and regulate the Nation's civilian use of byproduct, source, and special nuclear materials to ensure adequate protection of public health and safety, promote the common defense and security, and protect the environment." I believe that the increased use of risk information serves the agency in several respects. It improves safety and makes the regulatory process more transparent thus enhancing public confidence in the commission. It also promotes regulatory predictability and stability which is very important to all stakeholders.

I believe that the NRC is the premier nuclear regulatory agency in the world. If confirmed, I will make every effort to make sure it remains so.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and to dealing with the challenges that the NRC will face across all areas of its responsibilities.