

State of Government Control of Radionuclides in the U.S.

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For well over a decade a broad coalition of NGOs presented our mutual concerns of radionuclides entering the Great Lakes basin to the International Joint Commission (IJC). Our mutual concerns about radionuclides in the Great Lakes Basin had gotten acknowledgement by the IJC and were reflected in their Recommendations to all respective governments.

In the United States the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency have all been severely impacted by the US administration's agenda to deregulate, specifically pertaining to radionuclides and oversight of the environment.

In April and again in May, the President of the United States signed five Executive Orders that eviscerate regulations. The Executive Orders (EOs) are: [Restoring Gold Standard Science](#); [Ordering the Reform of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission](#); [Reinvigorating the Nuclear Industrial Base](#); [Reforming Nuclear Reactor Testing at the Department of Energy](#); and [Deploying Advanced Nuclear Reactor Technologies for National Security](#).

[Four of the Executive Orders](#) focused on the nuclear sector would:

- reduce and undermine the already inadequate safety oversight authority of the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC);
- fast-track unproven new reactor projects without regard for safety, health or environmental impacts;
- curtail or possibly even end public intervention;
- weaken already insufficient radiation exposure standards; and
- reopen the pathway between the civil and military sectors. (See Appendix for more details of the impacts of these Executive Orders)

Very recent articles from the most authoritative of sources articulate in great detail how these Executive Orders have weakened regulation of radionuclides and place the Public in great peril of exposure to radionuclides in water, soil and air.

¹ Michael is chair of the Coalition for a Nuclear Free Great Lakes. For the past 40 years he has actively engaged in opposition to nuclear power and nuclear proliferation. He has testified in hearings at County, State, Provincial, U.S. Federal and Canadian Federal levels providing expert testimony on nuclear power. Michael is a life-long resident of Monroe, Michigan.

Three former Nuclear Regulatory Commissioners spoke out most recently in The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists that “The White House has introduced radical changes that threaten to disrupt the effectiveness of the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)”.

Nuclear experts with the Union of Concerned Scientists published ‘Mission Impossible’ critique on NRC’s transformation from a nuclear safety agency into a promoter of nuclear power.

Allison MacFarlane (former chair of the NRC) warns that the US administration’s proposal to weaken the NRC is putting the US on the same path that led to the disaster at Fukushima.

The presence of radionuclides in the Great Lakes basin watershed and airshed are the earliest indications of problems with the nuclear industry. That monitoring has now been abandoned by the current NRC.

The Coalition for a Nuclear Free Great Lakes makes this appeal to the U.S. and Canadian federal governments to recognize radionuclides as Chemicals of Mutual Concern under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

Attached are annotated citations of recent authoritative articles on the current state of affairs with The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Appendix - Annotated Citations on The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission – A Snapshot

Why the US must protect the independence of its nuclear regulator

The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists by Stephen Burns, Allison Macfarlane, Richard Meserve July 7, 2025

<https://thebulletin.org/2025/07/why-the-us-must-protect-the-independence-of-its-nuclear-regulator/>

The White House has introduced radical changes that threaten to disrupt the effectiveness of the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). The agency was formed in 1975 to be an independent regulator, separating it from the promotional role pursued by its predecessor, the Atomic Energy Commission. The NRC has set safety requirements that have become the global gold standard for nuclear regulation. The White House actions threaten to undermine this record.

NRC's New Mission Impossible Making Atoms Great Again

The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists by Edwin Lyman May 29, 2025

https://thebulletin.org/2025/05/the-nrcs-new-mission-impossible-making-atoms-great-again/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Making%20Atoms%20Great%20Again%3F&utm_campaign=20250602%20Monday%20Newsletter

The United States President signed executive orders that transform the Nuclear Regulatory Commission from a nuclear safety agency into a promoter of nuclear power, Union of Concerned Scientist physicist Ed Lyman contends. As an independent agency, the NRC should reject the executive orders, which negate Congress' chief rationale for creating the agency—public safety. [Read more.](#)

https://www.independentnews.com/news/livermore_news/nuclear-expert-offers-stern-safety-warning/article_2b760689-41f1-4306-942b-fe78e8427539.html Allison

MacFarlane (former chair of the NRC) warns that the President's proposal to weaken the NRC is putting the US on the same path that led to the disaster at Fukushima.

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Energy Secretary Announces Updated NEPA Procedures to End Permitting Paralysis and Unleash American Energy

WASHINGTON— The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced new updates to the Department's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures, fixing the broken permitting process and delivering on President Trump's pledge to unleash American energy dominance and accelerate critical energy infrastructure. As part of a government-wide effort to restore common sense to permitting, DOE published

an [interim final rule](#) rescinding all NEPA regulations and published [new NEPA guidance procedures](#) for the Department of Energy.

Excerpt:

The current five NRC Commissioners during a January 2025 briefing by US NRC. Trump's reckless and accelerated nuclear orders would destroy safety oversight and endanger the public, writes Linda Pentz Gunter

On May 23rd, with several strokes of his pen, President Trump issued orders that would roll back US energy policy about 50 years.

On that day, the United States President signed five Executive Orders (EOs): [Restoring Gold Standard Science](#); [Ordering the Reform of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission](#); [Reinvigorating the Nuclear Industrial Base](#); [Reforming Nuclear Reactor Testing at the Department of Energy](#); and [Deploying Advanced Nuclear Reactor Technologies for National Security](#). ([This page](#) keeps a running tally of all the White House executive orders.) A [press release](#) headlined “President Trump Signs Executive Orders to Usher in a Nuclear Renaissance, Restore Gold Standard Science” Was release and included the following the following explanation that read: “Gold Standard Science is just that—science that meets the Gold Standard.”

Collectively, the four orders that focused on the nuclear sector would:

- reduce and undermine the already inadequate safety oversight authority of the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC);
- fast-track unproven new reactor projects without regard for safety, health or environmental impacts;
- curtail or possibly even end public intervention;
- weaken already insufficient radiation exposure standards; and
- reopen the pathway between the civil and military sectors,

all the while “unleashing” nuclear power expansion on a dangerous and unrealistic accelerated timeline.

[NRC NEPA Overhaul: Agency Plans to Amend Regulations in 10 CFR Part 51 – Up & Atom](#)

By Ryan Lighty of Morgan Lewis hocus pocus BLOG POST August 06, 2025

The Commission recently issued a [Staff Requirements Memorandum](#) (SRM) directing NRC Staff to revise the NRC’s National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) regulations at 10 CFR Part 51 and update related NRC guidance and policies. The NRC’s efforts are intended to streamline its NEPA process, consistent with broader federal agency trends, and implement efficiencies mandated by the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 (FRA).