

United States
Nuclear Infrastructure Council
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Statement by the US Nuclear Infrastructure Council

*On the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee's (EPW) potential consideration
of the nomination of Jeffery M. Baran without a full hearing to be a Member of the
Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for a term ending June 30, 2018*

Chairman Boxer's push to move the pending NRC nomination through the Senate EPW in a "lame duck" business session without a full hearing is troubling and an unsettling precedent.

The new term in question is significantly longer -- more than five times (approximately 44 months versus 8 months) -- than the term that the nominee was originally confirmed for in September. Moreover, there have been new developments since September about which any nominee should be asked to provide views, including the promulgation of NRC's Continued Storage Rule and the publication of Yucca Mountain Safety Evaluation Report Volume 3. It is entirely appropriate to hold additional hearings before confirming a nominee that might be a potential chairman for a nearly full term overseeing the nation's nuclear oversight agency.

Any unilateral action by the present Committee majority will only deepen lingering concerns about the Senate's politicalization of the NRC nomination process and the independence and integrity of the Commission, which is vital to confidence in the safe operation of the U.S. nuclear energy fleet and its contributions to energy and national security, competitiveness and environmental progress.

Further, it is important for the public to trust the Commissioners and the process that nominates and confirms them. Short-circuiting the nomination calls into question both the nominee and the process. For positions as key as this, it is critical that the process is beyond reproach and that due diligence is ensured at every turn.

We are puzzled by the rush to judgment on this nomination and hope the full Committee will give every consideration to insisting on a full hearing and regular order before taking any final action.

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The US Nuclear Infrastructure Council is the leading business consortium advocate for new nuclear energy and the involvement of the US supply chain globally (www.usnic.org). While the above statement reflects the consensus of the Council, it does not necessarily represent the specific views of USNIC member companies and organizations.