

Photo: Nuclear Regulatory Commission



NRC Executive Director of Operations Victor McCree speaks to attendees at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's annual Regulatory Information Conference.

nance costs associated with the facility's operation. The commission would then approve or reject the proposed facility designation and the total expected costs submitted by the public utility. The commission must make a final determination on the petition within 10 months of the filing date. If the PUC approves the proposal, the utility is entitled to recover any documented costs that do not exceed the costs included in the carbon reduction facility designation proposal.

In addition, a utility could petition annually for a carbon reduction rider to recover total costs outside the general proceeding. The PUC would be free to approve, modify, or reject the proposed rider.

Minnesota is one of several states considering legislative measures to help manage the costs of baseload nuclear generation; measures have already been passed in New York (*NN*, Sept. 2016, p. 12), Illinois (*NN*, Jan. 2017, p. 33), and New Jersey (see page 20, this issue).

NRC

Conference highlights modernization efforts

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission held its 30th annual Regulatory Information Conference (RIC) March 13-15 in Washington, D.C., with much of the talk focused on how the NRC can best prepare for regulating an industry undergoing significant change.

"Many of the NRC's processes and much of our regulatory framework were developed to serve mid-20th century nuclear technologies and needs," said Victor McCree, executive director of operations for the NRC, in his March 13 address to attendees. "While they have, and continue to, serve us well in accomplishing our mission, we recognize that the changes occurring in the nuclear industry will challenge this framework and additional

regulatory change is needed. The staff believes this can best be facilitated through a combination of innovative and transformative change."

As part of the overall plan to advance that change, McCree said, the NRC has put together a transformation team to "gather innovation techniques, ideas, and methodologies to successfully implement transformation, including strategies to enhance and sustain a transformative organizational culture; develop and recommend specific areas to initiate transformative change within the NRC; [and] create a strategy and change management plan to foster and sustain an innovative and transformative culture at NRC. He also asked that the team submit a paper to him asking for the NRC's support to advance the initiative. McCree said that more response will be needed in the regulation of areas such as digital instrumentation and control in safety-related applications, accident-tolerant fuels, new materials and new manufacturing approaches, Big Data, and advanced reactor designs.

Shortly after the conference, the Nuclear Energy Institute submitted to the NRC its own ideas and recommendations on the topic in the form of a 19-page document, *A Framework for Regulatory Transformation*. According to the document, NEI believes that a successful transformation for the agency must include an agile licensing process, risk-informed compliance, and a path to modernizing the plant licensing basis. "Recent changes in technology, understanding of risks and margins, and improvements in licensee performance have created a landscape where new regulatory approaches are needed to maintain NRC effectiveness," the document states.

McCree's RIC presentation can be viewed at the NRC's webcast portal, at <https://video.nrc.gov>. *A Framework for Regulatory Transformation* can be downloaded at <https://www.nei.org/resources/reports-briefs/framework-for-regulatory-transformation>. **NN**

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