

January 19, 2021

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Atlanta, GA 30329

José R. Romero, M.D., FAAP  
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road  
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*Submitted via electronic mail*

Dear Director Redfield and Chairman Romero,

We begin by expressing our deep gratitude for the efforts of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) during this pivotal point in our nation's history.

We are former Chairs of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), the federal agency responsible for overseeing the radiological safety and security of the nation's commercial nuclear power plants and nuclear materials. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been impressed by the efforts of America's essential nuclear energy workers to keep the lights on during these challenging times. Their work provides 20 percent of our country's overall electricity and 55 percent of its carbon-free electricity. Essential nuclear energy workers ensure not only that our homes and businesses are powered, but that our nation's critical infrastructure—from our telecommunications systems to the hospitals that care for our most vulnerable—remains functioning during this time of crisis.

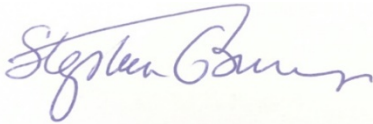
It has come to our attention that the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has updated its vaccine allocation guidance to place the energy workforce (including nuclear energy workers) in Phase 1c. We recognize that developing vaccine guidance is a complex task that requires consideration of numerous factors. For this reason, we write with utmost respect for that undertaking and with a narrow request: **As the Advisory Committee continues to review and update its recommendations, we urge you to consider a higher prioritization for at least a portion of the nuclear energy workforce. We respectfully request that you consider increasing the priority for at least the subset of the nuclear energy workforce necessary to meet the NRC's regulatory requirements for minimum staffing at nuclear power plants: control room operators, equipment operators, security officers, radiation protection technicians, maintenance technicians, and chemistry technicians. If a nuclear plant were unable to comply with the NRC's staffing requirements, it would be required to shut down.** Prioritizing the health and safety of these workers is vital to ensuring that NRC regulations are satisfied and that nuclear power plants may continue to produce safe, reliable, and carbon-free electricity.

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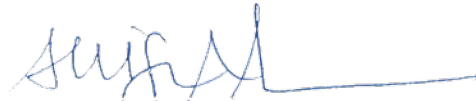
While we are aware that the nuclear industry as a whole has taken extraordinary precautions to protect its workforce throughout the pandemic, this highly specialized subset of essential nuclear energy workers must perform their duties on-site, often shoulder-to-shoulder with their colleagues in close quarters. It would be difficult to overstate the importance of their protection, given how critical their work is to the health, safety, and well-being of our families and communities. There are a limited number of staff trained to run nuclear plants and the loss of any of them to COVID will make the facility vulnerable to shutdown. Their work ensures that vital electricity continues to flow to all essential and front-line workers so that they can continue get their jobs done.

We would welcome the opportunity to engage in a dialogue regarding the urgency of protecting this subset of essential nuclear energy workers and the importance of your work when it comes to safeguarding America's electricity production.

Respectfully,



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Former Chairman  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission



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