

**Statement of U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer** Thursday, June 16, 2011

Hearing: Full Committee and Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety joint hearing entitled, "Oversight Hearing: the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Preliminary Results of the Nuclear Safety Review in the United States following the Emergency at the Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant in Japan."

Prepared remarks:

It has been over three months since Japan was hit by a devastating earthquake and tsunami, and it is expected to take additional time before cold shutdown of all reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant will be achieved.

The emergency in Japan serves as an important wake-up call for the United States, and we cannot afford to ignore it. If there is one lesson to be learned, it is that we must plan for the unexpected.

I am pleased to see that the NRC is taking initial steps to reevaluate current assumptions about the safety and security of nuclear power plants in the U.S., in light of what has happened in Japan. For example,

- the NRC's inspectors have inspected and issued reports on the 104 operating nuclear reactors and their readiness to address power losses or damage following extreme events; and
- the NRC is in the middle of a 90-day Task Force review of its processes and regulations in light of the events in Japan.

The most recent inspections of California's two nuclear power plants turned up numerous problems that need to be corrected. Among other things, NRC's inspections at Diablo Canyon Power Plant found that:

- State highways and access roads needed to reach diesel fuel and an alternative seawater source for cooling may be inaccessible after an earthquake; and
- Hoses needed to get cooling water from the reservoir to the plant were blocked by a security fence.

NRC's inspections at San Onofre Generating Station found:

- A lack of a written agreement for a fuel oil supply to support emergency diesel generators for more than 7 days; and
- Some firefighting equipment was stored in locations that could be impacted by an earthquake.

I have concerns about seismic issues at both California plants. Diablo Canyon has submitted its application to the NRC for license renewal. The 3-D seismic studies need to be considered as part of the license renewal process at Diablo.

3-D seismic studies should also be part of the NRC's review of San Onofre's license renewal application, once it is submitted.

I expect the NRC to closely examine the results of these inspections in California and other states across the country, as well as reexamine current regulations such as what is considered in the NRC's review of license renewal applications.

I also expect the Commission to implement Task Force recommendations that will help ensure the health and safety of all Americans.

I applaud the Commission for making the results of its inspections of the U.S. nuclear power fleet available to the public immediately after compilation by NRC staff in May and June.

I also believe it is critical for public confidence in the safety of our nuclear facilities that the results of the 90-day Task Force report be available to the public as soon as it is compiled by NRC staff in July.

Complete openness, transparency and prompt disclosure are vital to maintaining the federal government's credibility and the confidence of the American people.