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U.S. NRC Chairman Stresses Importance of Independent Regulator; Lauds Cooperative Relationship with Korean Agency

SEOUL, REPUBLIC OF KOREA – The top nuclear regulator in the United States Tuesday said nuclear regulators must be independent agencies within governments to ensure a consistent, safety-based approach to overseeing the use of nuclear materials.

NRC Chairman Allison M. Macfarlane also praised the relationship the NRC has with the Korean regulator, the Nuclear Safety and Security Commission.

“Having a regulator that is independent, well-funded, and backed by the government is essential to ensure effective oversight over nuclear operators,” Macfarlane said. “We work closely with our colleagues in Republic of Korea, and I hope to further strengthen our already strong relationship in coming years.”

Macfarlane is also chairman of the Multinational Design Evaluation Process (MDEP), an international organization that brings together national nuclear regulators considering similar new reactor designs to share knowledge and experience and thus strengthen safety.

One element of the MDEP organization looks at strengthening the integrity of the global nuclear supply chain.

“Like many others, the nuclear industry is truly global. Reactors in the United States get parts from abroad, and reactors abroad get parts from the United States. It is critical that all regulators work to ensure that only quality, properly approved parts enter the supply chain for this industry,” Macfarlane said.