

System is Blinking Red

New York Decommissioning Oversight Board
February 12, 2026 - M. Lee presentation

Overview

- Nuclear Regulatory Scheme: Dismantled
- Career Staffers: Gone
- Rush to build
- Context: All important
- Specifically Relevant to DOB

ADVANCE Act Detonates

Changed the mission of the NRC.

Nullifies intent Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 that established NRC, splitting the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) into the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

June 2024, without hearings, 3-page Act to amend the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 changed to “Accelerating Deployment of Versatile, Advanced Nuclear for Clean Energy Act” - signed into law by President Biden in July 2024.

“Make no mistake: This is not about making the reactor licensing process more efficient, but about weakening safety and security oversight across the board, a longstanding industry goal.” - [UCS Lyman](#), June 17. 2024

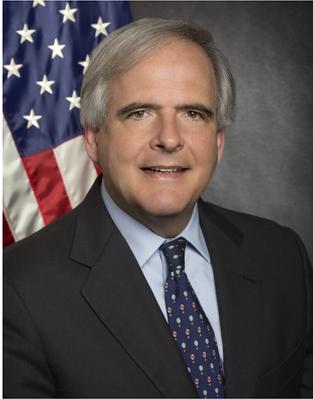
May 2025 Nuclear Executive Orders (EOs)

- Overhaul NRC regulation
- Hand powers to approve new reactor designs and projects to DOE
- Big control role to OMB
- Nuclear safety gatekeeper now clearly industry sponsor

Source: [Executive Orders](#)

Former NRC Chairs on May 2025 Nuclear EOs

“This is the detailed, agency-specific effort to override the historic independent agency construct.”



Stephen Burns, Former NRC Chairman
May 14, 2025
Source: [Camacho](#)

Trump’s executive orders look like someone asked an AI chatbot, “**How do we make the nuclear industry worse in this country?**” He called the orders a “**guillotine to the nation’s nuclear safety system**” that will make the country less safe, the industry less reliable and the climate crisis more severe.



Gregory Jaczko,
Former NRC Chairman
May 23, 2025
Source: [Daly](#)

EO Fallout: Secretly Tossing Safety

Sweeping changes made to accelerate development new nuclear reactor designs.

Changes to departmental orders which dictate requirements for almost every aspect of the reactors' operations — including **safety systems, environmental protections, site security and accident investigations**.

Clock ticking for agency staff to get reactors by July 4, 2025.

The new orders **strip out some guiding principles of nuclear safety**, notably a concept known as "As Low As Reasonably Achievable" (**ALARA**), which requires nuclear reactor operators to keep levels of radiation exposure below the legal limit whenever they can. The ALARA standard has been in use for decades at both the Department of Energy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Secretary of Energy Chris Wright gave approval to end ALARA, in part to "reduce the economic and operational burden on nuclear energy.

Source: [Brumfiel](#), Jan 28, 2026

Tossing Environmental Review

New Nuclear Reactors Exempt from Environmental Review

NEPA out the window

npr **wnyc** NEWSLETTERS SIGN IN NPR SHOP DONATE

NEWS CULTURE MUSIC PODCASTS & SHOWS SEARCH

TECHNOLOGY

The Trump administration exempts new nuclear reactors from environmental review

FEBRUARY 2, 2026 · 3:09 PM ET
HEARD ON MORNING EDITION
Geoff Brumfiel

2-Minute Listen +PLAYLIST TRANSCRIPT



The Advanced Test Reactor at Idaho National Laboratory. The laboratory will soon be home to five new test reactors being built by private companies. Supporters hope the reactors will power data centers needed for artificial intelligence.
Idaho National Laboratory

The Trump administration has created an exclusion for new experimental

Source: [Brumfiel](#),
Feb 2, 2026

Harvard Study: Radioactive Particulate Contamination

- **Strong evidence nuclear fuel (uranium, thorium, and lead-210) and nuclear fission-related (cesium-137) isotopes in samples of indoor dust and soil in the vicinity of nuclear plant.**
- **Also evidence uranium-235, cobalt-60, polonium-210 in particulate matter.**
- **Isotopes found in public or residential areas outside of radiation protection zones. “Inhalable or ingestible radioactive microparticles containing thorium and uranium were found in particulate matter near the PNPP.”**
- **Radioactive materials in particulate matter outside of nuclear power station “represents a significant potential source of internal radiation dose to people in the surrounding area.”**

Source: [Kaltofen](#), Environmental Engineering Science, 2025.



Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station,
Plymouth, Massachusetts

Harvard Study: Cancers Near Nuclear Plants

Harvard team estimated that about **20,600 cancer cases** in Massachusetts were attributable to living near a nuclear power plant.

Proximity to plants significantly increased cancer incidence, with risk declining by distance. Cancer site-specific analyses identified significant associations for the following cancers: bladder; breast; colorectal; esophageal; Hodgkin lymphoma; kidney; laryngeal; leukemia; lung; melanoma; oral; pancreatic; prostate; thyroid; and uterine

“The **strong association observed with lung cancer**, the most prevalent and lethal cancer in [the Harvard group’s] analysis, suggests inhalation of airborne radionuclides as a potential exposure pathway.”

Source: **HARVARD T.C. CHAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**
Residential proximity nuclear power plants
and cancer incidence in Massachusetts,
([Alwadi ... Peskoe, Environmental Health](#), Dec 17, 2025)

Thank you for your kind attention!

*Extended references provided in document filed with
Decommissioning Oversight Board*