

January 28, 2009

The Honorable Mark Begich  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Begich:

I am writing to congratulate you on your election to the United States Senate. It will be an honor to work with you on the important issues facing this country in the coming years.

As you may know, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is an independent agency established by the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 to regulate civilian nuclear power and use of nuclear materials. Our mission is to protect the public health and safety and the environment, and to maintain the common defense and security. In carrying out that mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we face several important challenges. The agency has received a total of 17 combined license applications for 26 new nuclear power plants across the country and expects to receive an additional 3 applications for another 5 nuclear power plants in 2009. As a result, NRC's challenges will include the efficient management of these applications for new commercial nuclear plants while continuing to ensure the safe operation of existing plants. We must also look ahead and prepare for the development of new reactor designs and fuel cycle concepts. Additionally, NRC must maintain its regulation of nuclear materials to ensure the safety in uses for medical and industrial purposes. Most importantly, we must continue to develop the human resources that the NRC will need to have to ensure continued public safety and environmental quality.

The NRC has established a framework of regulatory stability to both keep current nuclear plants safe and secure as well as meet these emerging challenges. However, we continually assess and strive to improve our efforts as needed.

I would welcome the opportunity to brief you or your staff about the NRC. If this would be helpful, please contact Rebecca L. Schmidt, Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, at 301-415-1776 or [Rebecca.Schmidt@nrc.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Schmidt@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Dale E. Klein

Identical letter to be sent to:

The Honorable Mark Begich  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mark Udall  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jim Risch  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johanns  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kay Hagan  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mark Warner  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510