



Ohio Sunset Review Committee
Utility Radiological Safety Board
Wednesday, August 28, 2024

Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair Hillyer, and members of the Sunset Review Committee. My name is Sima Merick and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (OhioEMA) at the Ohio Department of Public Safety. I am here to provide testimony on behalf of the Utility Radiological Safety Board (URSB).

I would like to begin today by providing some background on the board. The Utility Radiological Safety Board (URSB) was established by the Ohio General Assembly as part of Amended Substitute House Bill 111 of the 118th General Assembly. According to Ohio Revised Code Chapter 4937, the board is responsible for developing a comprehensive policy for the state regarding nuclear power safety. This responsibility is accomplished through the promotion of safe, reliable, and economical power; establish agreements with the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the State; and recommend policies and practices that promote safety, performance, emergency preparedness, and public health standards that are designed to meet the State's needs.

The Utility Radiological Safety Board (URSB) is comprised of individuals representing the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Health, the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.

The board is chaired by the Executive Director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency and administrative support is also provided by OhioEMA. Each of the member agencies also have statutory responsibilities related to the safe operation of nuclear power in Ohio, and those responsibilities are as follows:

- The Ohio EMA develops the state plan for response to radiological emergencies, trains local emergency responders, and maintains radiation monitoring equipment.
- The Department of Health collects and analyzes radiological material release data from monitoring devices near the nuclear power plants and is the lead agency for developing and issuing public health protection advisories in the event of an emergency at a nuclear power plant in or impacting Ohio.
- The Environmental Protection Agency ensures utility compliance with discharge permits and monitors hazardous waste disposal and air emissions.
- The Department of Commerce inspects the nuclear reactors and other pressure components at each nuclear power plant.
- The Department of Agriculture routinely tests milk and is the lead agency for developing and issuing recommendations for protection of livestock and poultry in the event of an emergency at a nuclear power plant in or impacting Ohio.
- The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio reviews utility capital investments, management, expenses, and plant operation and regulates electricity rates.

The Utility Radiological Safety Board (URSB) is able to protect the public interest in the safe operation of nuclear power plants in and impacting Ohio. The quarterly meetings of both the Board and the Working Group allow members to coordinate their individual responsibilities regarding nuclear power, provide clear and concise information to the public, address citizen inquiries, safely regulate the nuclear power industry and plan for and mitigate emergencies related to nuclear power plants.

In closing, the State has been well-served by this coordinated approach to nuclear power safety. The continued existence of the Utility Radiological Safety Board (URSB) is critical to continuing this effective, efficient coordination and cooperation among the various state agencies. It is our recommendation that the board continue to operate uninterrupted.

Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair Hillyer, and members of the Sunset Review Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon. I would be happy to answer questions from the committee at this time.