

## **Support the Nuclear Advisory Committee Reform Act**

### **Background**

Under section 182b of the Atomic Energy Act, the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) reviews nearly every nuclear licensing application, on top of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's own review process.

The Committee, statutorily established in 1957, was essential when nuclear energy was largely untested and nascent federal regulatory authority relied on limited, in-house technical capacity. Since then, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has acquired a wealth of technical and safety expertise. While ACRS remains a critical authority on nuclear safety, a decades-old statutory framework was not designed for the wave of advanced reactors now entering the pipeline. Treating every application as requiring equivalent review no longer functions as a safety measure, but risks becoming a procedural bottleneck that can impede ACRS' timely review of novel technologies ready for deployment.

### **What the Bill Does**

The Nuclear Advisory Committee Reform Act realigns the ACRS' valuable expertise and resources towards applications that carry real safety significance. Rather than applying uniformly to every application, ACRS review would only occur at the NRC's determination. Duplicative and settled matters would no longer consume ACRS' limited bandwidth, freeing the Committee to do its real job: providing rigorous safety evaluations for applications that demand them.

### **Specifically, this bill would:**

- Authorize NRC determination of ACRS license application reviews, removing the current mandatory framework.
- Refocus ACRS on its core mission by prioritizing review for novel, safety-significant reactor design and technical issues, rather than reexamination of previously resolved or non-safety focused matters.
- Reinforce ACRS' role as an independent technical advisor by enabling the Committee to identify and recommend safety-significant issues to the Commission for further review.
- Modernize ACRS membership by requiring the Committee collectively reflects a diverse range of technical expertise relevant to the mission of the NRC.

### **Bottom line**

As the next generation of nuclear technology approaches rapid deployment at scale, it is critical that our nation's nuclear licensing process does not mistake procedure for safety.