

Opening Statement of Dr. Matthew C. Napoli
Nominee for Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation of the National
Nuclear Security Administration at the U.S. Department of Energy
Before the United States Senate Committee on Armed Services
May 13, 2025

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and members of this esteemed Committee. I respectfully appear before you today seeking your confirmation for my service as the Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation within the National Nuclear Security Administration, Department of Energy.

Before I begin, I would like to thank President Trump and Secretary of Energy Chris Wright for their trust and confidence.

I would like to recognize my family in attendance today. My wife Nicole, who is the foundation of our family. Our daughters Eleanor, an avid competitive fencer, and Abigail, an all-star softball player. My mother, Shirley Napoli, and my siblings Dr. Mark Napoli and soon to be Dr. Mary Napoli are here from Louisiana and my brother Mike Napoli is here from California. I also have several friends and colleagues here to support me as well. I was born and raised in a relatively small town in north Louisiana. My father, a local pharmacist and Navy veteran who is watching us from above, taught me and my whole family the importance of community and the importance of service to this great nation.

I have spent my entire adult life serving this nation through my military and federal service. My educational background, including engineering degrees from Louisiana Tech University and the Naval Postgraduate School, a doctorate in public policy and administration concentrating in science and technology policy from The George Washington University, a fellowship in national security from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and my lifetime membership on the Council on Foreign Relations, have given me the foundation for a career spent bridging the gap between policy and the technical fields of engineering and science

My military and federal civilian career, spanning over 20 years, has been dedicated to an elite engineering organization - the U.S. Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program (also known to this committee as Naval Reactors), a joint department of Navy, Department of Energy organization.

Naval Reactors has afforded our Navy with an unmatched asymmetric advantage in naval warfare. This advantage is manifested in the nuclear-powered fast attack submarine -- the ocean's apex predator; the ballistic missile nuclear-powered submarine--the backbone of American strategic deterrence; and the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier--100,000 tons of U.S. sovereign territory anywhere in the oceans, at anytime. I am proud to have served on this team.

During my tenure at Naval Reactors, I have achieved a broad range of experience in defense applications of nuclear energy, starting as a design engineer for the Ford Class aircraft carrier's

propulsion plants and transitioning to lead for foreign policy, interagency policy, and public affairs.

I managed and expanded port access for the nuclear-powered fleet to over 150 ports in over 50 countries and was personally involved in the training of all nuclear-powered submarine and aircraft carrier commanding officers on foreign policy matters as they came through Naval Reactors for qualification. I have overseen partnerships with some of our closest allies, including: the United Kingdom through our mutual defense agreement; the Government of Japan hosting the only forward-deployed U.S. nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in Yokosuka; and Australia in the design and execution of our newest defense nuclear cooperation agreement.

I have led strategic and emergency communications for an enterprise totaling approximately 100,000 strong, including: nuclear-trained Sailors, shipyard workers, procurement specialists, schoolhouse instructors, and DOE laboratory scientists and engineers. I have also served as a lead spokesman for the Naval Reactors enterprise.

I am now seeking your confirmation to become the Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation within NNSA.

The responsibilities of the nonproliferation team are profound. An exquisite team of scientists, engineers, analysts, laboratory researchers and technicians, first responders, and many others work arduously to (1) **prevent** the spread of nuclear weapons and associated nuclear technologies and combat the existential threat to our national security that these weapons pose, (2) coordinate these activities with partners and allies including the International Atomic Energy Agency to **deter** state and non-state actors from acquiring nuclear and radiological weapons, and (3) stand ready to **respond** in the event of nuclear or radiological weapons usage.

Our Nation faces *immediate* complex challenges in the area of nuclear nonproliferation. If confirmed, I am ready to take upon these responsibilities with the utmost *urgency*. Thank you.