

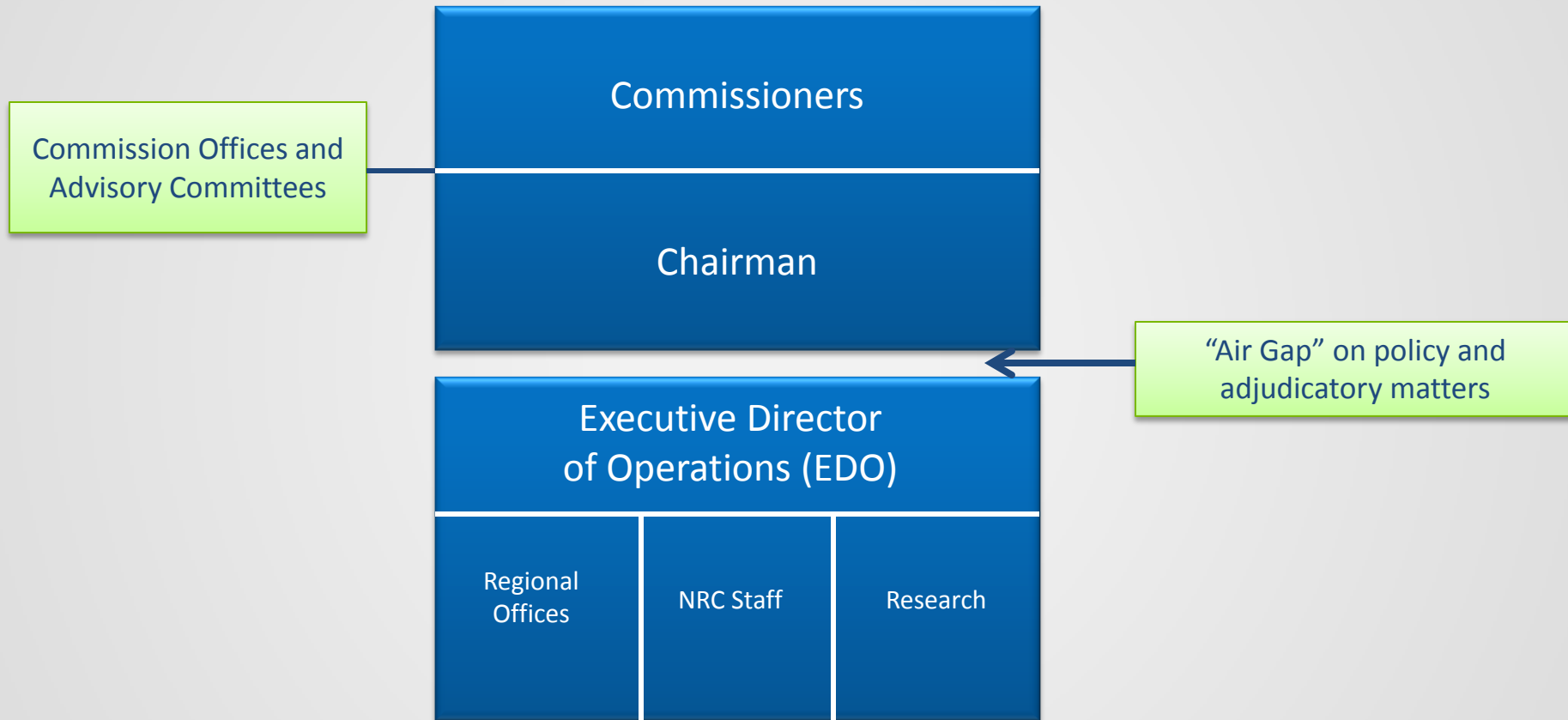
# FEATURES OF THE U.S. NRC STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

**Paul T. Dickman,**

Senior Policy Fellow,  
Argonne National Laboratory  
Washington Office



# STRUCTURE OF THE NRC



# NRC COMMISSIONERS SERVE AS JUDGES

- The Commission is an “appellate body” for decisions made by the NRC staff or licensing boards
- The Commissioners are not scientific peer reviewers
- The Commissioners do not
  - Conduct technical investigations
  - Routinely conduct licensing hearings
  - Manage the NRC staff
- The Commissioners’ most important duties are to
  - Settle disputes
  - Set policy for the NRC



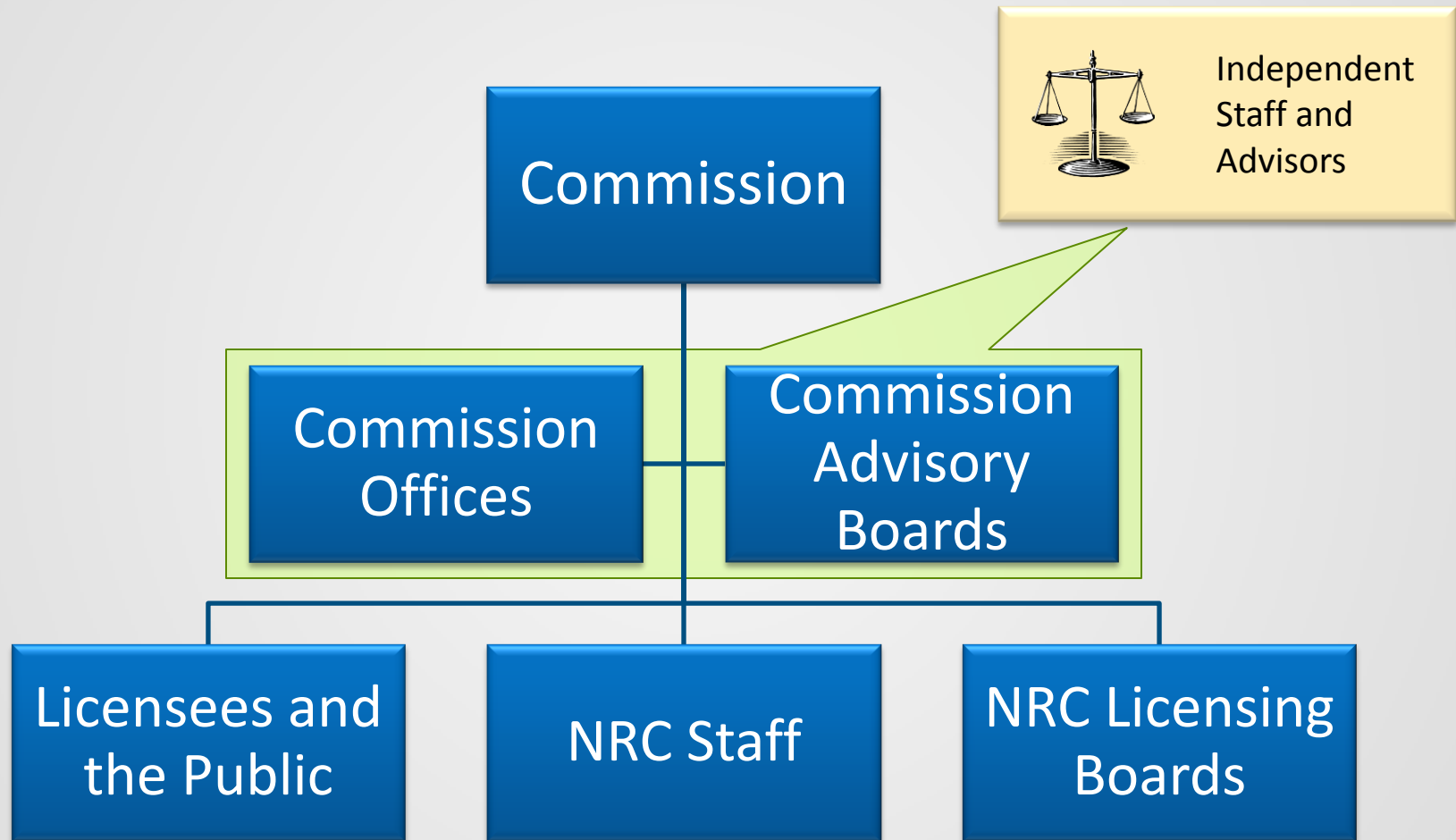
# STRUCTURE OF THE COMMISSION



- All Commissioners have equal authority in all policy and adjudicatory matters
- The Chairman has greater authority in administrative issues
- The President appoints the Chairman from the sitting Commissioners



# BALANCING ALL VIEWS FROM ALL SOURCES



# ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON REACTOR SAFEGUARDS (ACRS)



*Edward Teller*

- Prestigious body of technical experts first created in 1955, and chaired by Edward Teller
- The ACRS was established by statute in the Atomic Energy Act of 1954; it is the most influential technical body dealing with nuclear safety in the U.S.
- The ACRS is independent of the NRC staff and reports directly to the Commission, which appoints its members

**An independent technical body  
inside an independent agency**



# RELATIONSHIP OF THE ACRS TO THE COMMISSION

- ACRS is much more than an advisory board; it may pursue lines of inquiry relevant to advancing safety within limits establish by the Commission
- Routinely challenges the views of NRC staff and external organizations
- Provides independent assessment of complex technical issues for the Commission
- Serves as scientific “peer review” body for the Commission

*The Commission must consider the views of the ACRS when reaching decisions.*





# ATOMIC SAFETY LICENSING BOARD (ASLB)



- Independent *trial*-level adjudicatory body of the NRC
- Conducts public hearings on contested issues that arise in licensing and enforcement proceedings
- Provides licensees and the public an opportunity to challenge proposed licensing and enforcement activities

Decisions of the ASLB are final unless appealed to the Commission



# ASLB COMPOSITION

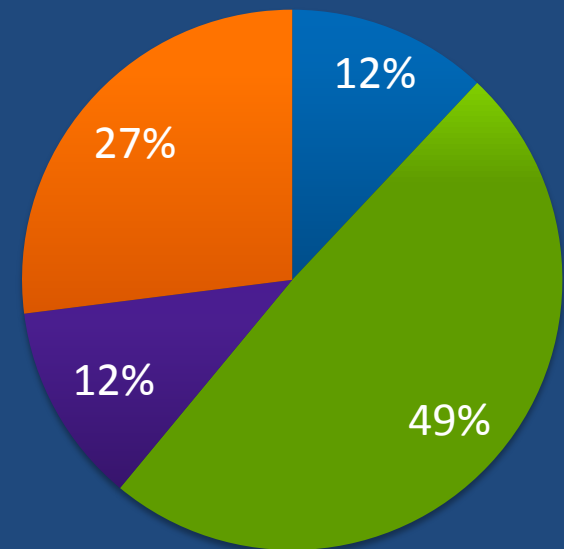
Three full time judges  
including the ASLB Chairman.

32 part-time judges, most at  
PhD level

37% of ASLB members hold  
**both** advanced technical and  
law degrees

**Highest Degree**

■ Natural Sciences	■ Engineering
■ Earth Sciences	■ Law



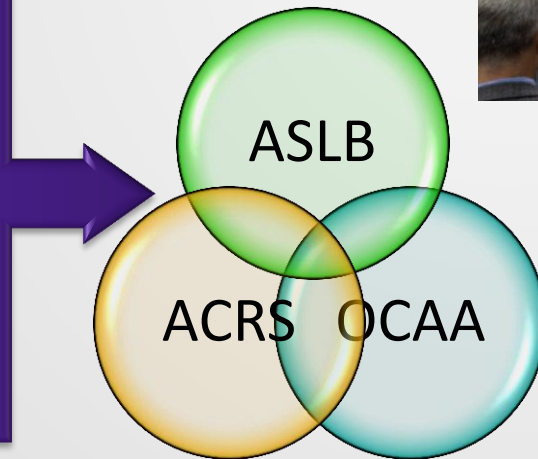
# ROLE AND RELATIONSHIP OF THE ASLB

- Independent from the NRC staff; it reaches objective decisions based on the record
- Acts as a lower court to the Commission's role as the appellate body
- Filters issues of technical and substantive merit and denies intervention for political motivations
- ASLB decisions are final and can only be overturned by the full Commission

*The Commission must publicly state why it agrees or disagrees with the ASLB on any appeal.*



# FILTERING WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT



Technical  
Policy  
Legal Merit

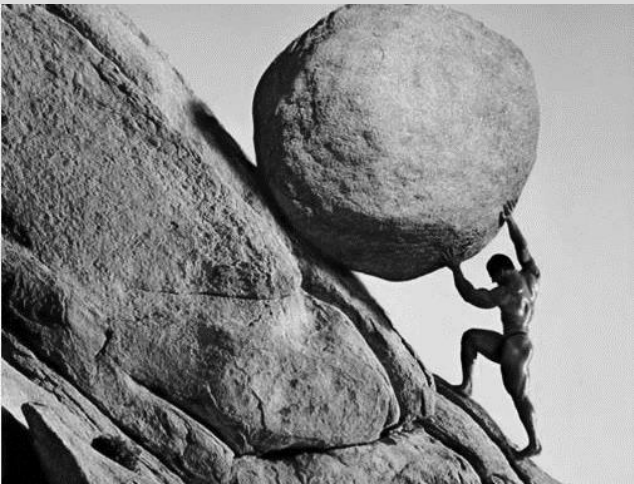


# NRC ROUTINELY INTERACTS WITH INDUSTRY AND PUBLIC



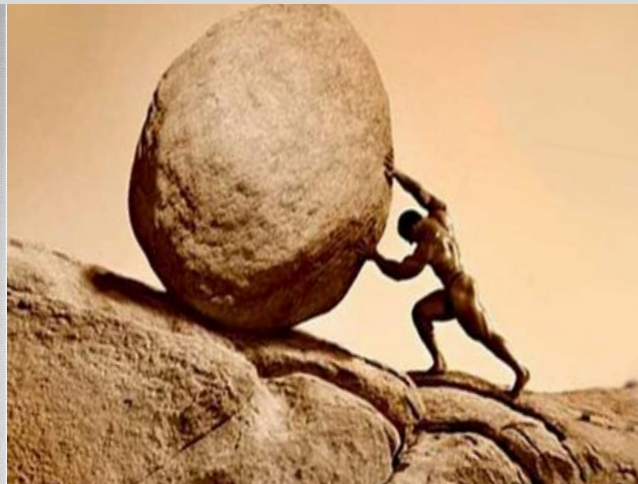


# MAINTAINING SAFETY REQUIRES CONSTANT EFFORT



## GEN 2 & 3

- Defense in Depth
- High Maintenance



## GEN 3+ and 4

- Defense in Depth
- Passive Safety Features and Design
- Moderate Maintenance



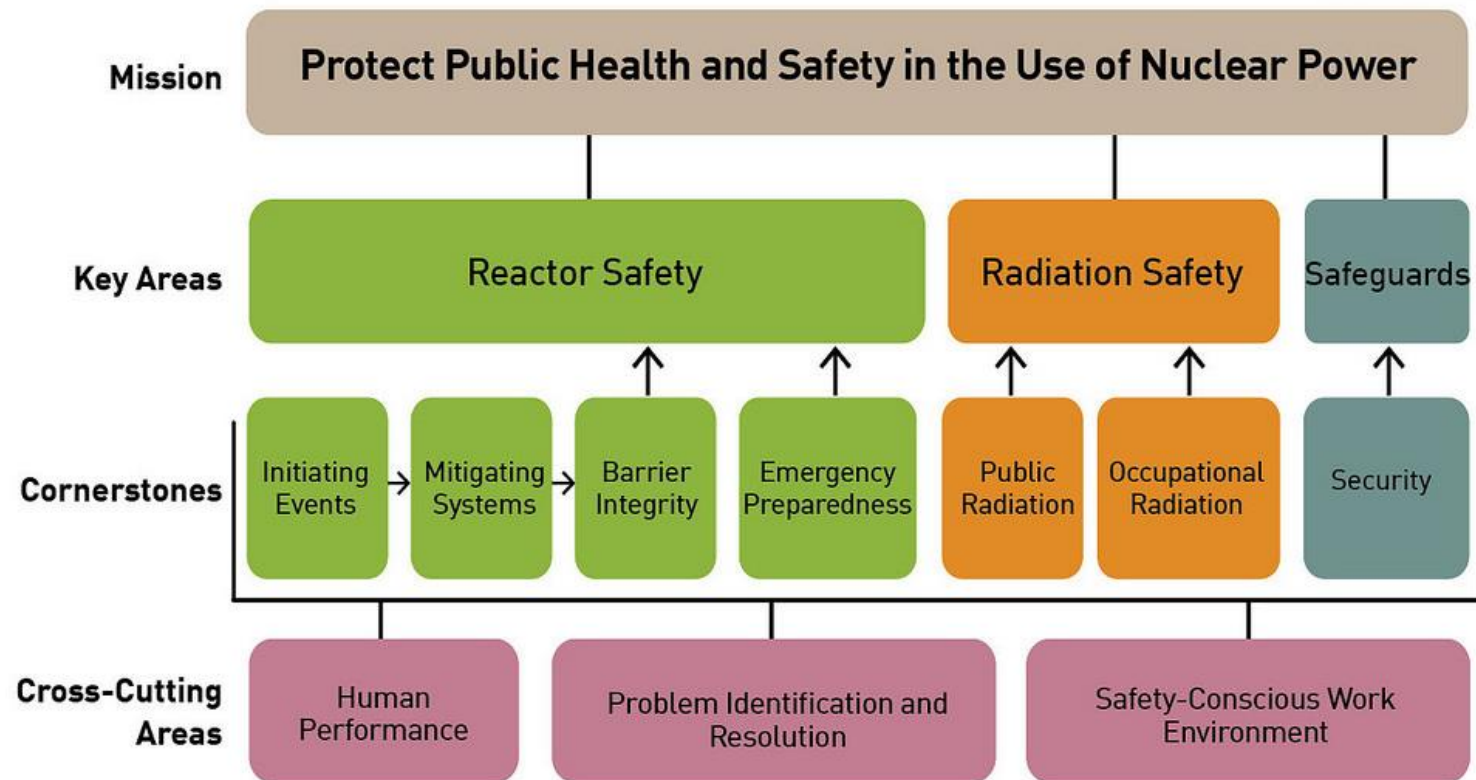
## GEN 5?

- Defense in Depth
- Design for Passive and Intrinsic Safety
- Low Maintenance

# REACTOR OVERSIGHT PROCESS

## Reactor Oversight Framework

 **U.S.NRC**  
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
*Protecting People and the Environment*  
AUGUST 2014





# OCTOBER 22, 2015

## WATTS BAR UNIT 2



First new reactor operating license in 20 years issued by NRC Staff.



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

ご清聴ありがとうございました

