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Thank you, John for that introduction.

We are fortunate as a state and a nation to have **Admiral John Grossenbacher** directing the critical research taking place at the Idaho National Laboratory. You won't find a more passionate advocate for nuclear technology – or one who's more practical.

We need more of that in public policy – people who can effectively combine their passion with what's practical. I join John in his passionate belief that nuclear must be an important part of our energy future. And as policy makers, we need your help and your wisdom on how to make that a practical reality.

I'm happy that John and the INL are my partners in that effort. I'm also happy to be able to welcome such a distinguished international group here to the Intermountain West.

It is appropriate that you are meeting here – returning to the region where the first usable amounts of nuclear energy were produced for peaceful purposes. Just a few miles up the road, Arco, Idaho is the "birthplace of nuclear energy."

When someone has a great idea or a flash of brilliance, we often say, "The light went on." Last year was the 60th anniversary of a brilliant idea out on the Arco Desert that literally turned on the lights – with energy from the Experimental Breeder Reactor One (EBR-1) lighting **four** light bulbs.

Construction was completed in 1951 on that historic reactor at what now is the Idaho National Laboratory. Since then 51 other reactors have gone up at the INL, where scientists and researchers have been answering tough questions and proving nuclear concepts in Idaho for more than six decades. John and I want to continue and grow that partnership with you toward finding solutions to some of energy's most difficult questions.

Today, the INL's Advanced Test Reactor – or ATR – is the world's premier nuclear test reactor. And it's a vital tool in developing the next generation of nuclear power plants. That continues a great tradition of work at the

INL having a significant influence on every commercial reactor designed in the United States and in many of your countries.

Let me talk for a minute about why your discussions here at this conference are so important.

One of the key points I make when I meet with a business leader looking to expand or open up a new business in Idaho is our low-cost, reliable energy. We have a competitive advantage that provides enormous benefits to Idaho's industrial, commercial and residential customers.

The average residential monthly electric bill in Idaho is 30 percent less than the national average. The downside is that Idaho only generates about half the electricity it uses; the rest is imported primarily from coal-fired plants in neighboring states.

Now, we all know that demand for energy nationwide will grow significantly in the next few decades. For Idaho and many other areas of the western United States, that means we need to increase the supply of safe, reliable and affordable power. And that in turn will require us to be more efficient and more effective, more creative and more collaborative in the role we play as policy makers, industry leaders and regulators of commercial nuclear power.

Nuclear power has reliably and economically contributed almost 20 percent of electrical generation in America for over two decades. And at more than 70 percent, nuclear remains America's single largest generator of non-greenhouse-gas-emitting electric power.

But we can't afford to rest on our laurels. Even maintaining that level of contribution to our energy needs will require developing technologies and other solutions to improve the reliability, sustain the safety and extend the life of the reactors we already have.

The Light Water Reactor Sustainability Program here in the United States is our focus toward reaching that goal. And I'm proud that Dr. Kathy McCarthy of the INL is playing such a critical role in that program.

Now let me tell you how Idaho and the INL intend to continue being a leader in the research, development and deployment of nuclear technologies.

I've recently assembled some of the brightest minds in Idaho to serve on a commission for Leadership in Nuclear Energy – or "LINE." In fact, the chairman of the LINE Commission, **Jeff Sayer**, is with us here today.

On the heels of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future, I want to make sure the INL is well-positioned on fuel cycle technologies and research and development programs, and that we enhance the vitality of our growing private-sector nuclear industry.

So I'm directing my LINE Commission to identify strategic opportunities for Idaho to influence, benefit from and potentially lead development and implementation of technologies in a global environment.

I also am very interested in **your** discussions at this conference and beyond as we work together on addressing the global social, political, financial and regulatory impediments to our nuclear future.

Finally, let me speak for a minute about the need to not only extend the life of our nuclear plants, but also to ensure that we have the necessary skilled workforce to support nuclear energy. In Idaho, we have established the Center for Advanced Energy Studies. It's a unique collaborative effort between the State of Idaho, our three research universities, and the Idaho National Laboratory. The return on our investment of State dollars in faculty who not only teach but also conduct critical research has been about 11 to 1.

Our innovative approach to collaborative research has generated interest from our neighboring states as well as nations half a world away – not only in the research we do, but also in the students we're training.

With so many upcoming retirements in both the civilian and defense-related nuclear fields, we need to increase the quality, availability and quantity of skilled workers. And we're doing that. Five years ago, we had just a couple of dozen students in our nuclear engineering programs. Today, we have over 400.

I hope all this gives you a feel for the importance we place on your work. As policy makers and opinion leaders, we'll benefit from your collective input and wisdom here at this conference.

As you focus on extending the life of nuclear plants, remember that your efforts also will benefit the entire scope of nuclear research and development while improving the way we design, finance, site, license, permit and build new nuclear plants and extend the lives of our existing reactors.

One final thought as you begin your work here:

Building and maintaining public trust and confidence is central to the future of nuclear energy and every other public policy issue. We need to deal with these difficult, technical and challenging issues in a way that the public can understand and embrace.

Thank you. And again, welcome to this conference.