

March 20, 2002

Ms. Donna Parrish  
56 Arrowhead Road  
Duxbury, MA 02332

Dear Ms. Parrish:

I am responding on behalf of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to your letter, which was received in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation on February 20, 2002. I apologize for the delay in responding. Unfortunately, your letter was delayed due to the problems related to handling mail sent to the Federal government.

We understand that your concerns related to the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station (Pilgrim Station) involve plant security, including the refusal of Entergy to use National Guard troops, and the need for a no fly zone, low power operation during "alert status," distribution of potassium iodide (KI) for residents in the emergency zones, accountability and information from Entergy and the NRC, and a public hearing to address questions and concerns of local citizens.

Immediately following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the NRC issued an advisory to the licensees of all nuclear power plants and other nuclear facilities. The advisory encouraged licensees, such as Entergy, to establish the highest level of security, consistent with a set of predetermined measures for raising the security level at nuclear facilities. For the longer term, NRC Chairman Richard A. Meserve directed the NRC staff to reevaluate the Agency's safeguards and physical security programs thoroughly in a top-to-bottom review. While this review is continuing, on February 25, 2002, the NRC issued Orders to all commercial nuclear power plants and other key nuclear facilities to implement interim compensatory security measures for the high-level threat environment. Some of these requirements formalize the security measures that NRC licensees had taken in response to advisories issued by the NRC in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks. The Commission decided to issue Orders because the generalized high-level threat environment has persisted longer than expected and, as a result, it is appropriate to maintain the security measures within the established regulatory framework. On February 26, 2002, the NRC issued a news release which discussed the February 25, 2002, Orders. The Order and news release are posted on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov> under "What's Happening, What's New at the Site" and "Headlines, More News Releases," respectively.

Concerning the use of National Guard troops at Pilgrim Station, we have been informed by the NRC resident inspectors at Pilgrim Station that Entergy has used National Guard troops since October 22, 2001, to supplement the plant security force and is continuing to use those troops for that function.

You suggested the need for a no fly zone over Pilgrim Station. Following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued advisories to pilots to avoid flights near nuclear power plants. In addition, in response to alerts issued by Federal law enforcement agencies, the FAA instituted temporary flight restrictions in the vicinity of certain nuclear power plants as the circumstances warranted. No such site-specific restrictions are presently in place, although the general advisories remain in effect.

Regarding your suggestion that Pilgrim Station reduce power during an "alert status," the NRC and its reactor licensees have established protocols to ensure appropriate actions are taken in the event of a credible threat. The NRC, along with other Federal agencies, is prepared to assess threats to nuclear power plants and the best methods to provide sufficient protection for those plants.

You also recommended that KI be supplied to residents in the Pilgrim Station emergency zones. In January 2001 the NRC revised a portion of its emergency response regulations to require that KI be considered as a protective measure for the general public in the event of a severe nuclear power plant accident. The NRC left the final decision to the States as to whether the use of KI was warranted in light of the major role of the State in the preparation and implementation of emergency plans. The NRC has proceeded with implementing a KI distribution program for States that decide to include KI in their range of public protective actions, with the NRC funding the initial purchases of KI for those States. In January 2002 the State of Massachusetts placed an order with the NRC for KI tablets. Massachusetts received its requested supply of KI on February 21, 2002, and must now determine how the KI will be distributed to local communities.

You commented on the need for accountability and information from Entergy and the NRC and the need for a public hearing to address the questions and concerns of local citizens. Since a public hearing is an adjudicatory process requiring formation of a board consisting of administrative judges, we assumed by the overall content of your letter that your intent was to suggest a public meeting rather than a public hearing. In recent months, the NRC has participated in two public meetings in the vicinity of Pilgrim Station. The first meeting, sponsored by United States Congressman William D. Delahunt and the Plymouth Board of Selectmen, was on October 29, 2001, and discussed plant security issues at Pilgrim Station. Representatives from the NRC, the FAA, the United States Coast Guard, Entergy, and local authorities and officials participated in the panel discussion. An NRC representative on the panel discussed measures that have been taken to enhance communications and security at nuclear power plants. Representatives from three of the major national media networks and local media were present, and members of the public addressed questions to the panel members during the meeting. The second meeting, which was initiated by local citizens, was held February 24, 2002, in Plymouth, Massachusetts and was attended by Congressman Delahunt, several local and state politicians, representatives from the NRC, Entergy and the United States Department of Energy, and approximately 45 members of the local community. The focus of the meeting was to discuss issues associated with spent fuel storage. The NRC supported the meeting agenda by making a presentation on spent fuel storage systems and by responding to questions from those in attendance.

Regarding public meetings in the near future, you may be interested to know that on March 28, 2002, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., at the John Carver Inn in Plymouth, Massachusetts, the NRC will be conducting a public meeting to discuss Pilgrim Station's safety performance for the period April 1, 2001, through December 31, 2001. Similar public meetings will be conducted nationwide with all commercial reactor licensees as part of the NRC's Reactor Oversight Process inspection program. In light of the meetings discussed in the previous paragraph and the forthcoming March 28, 2002, meeting, we do not believe that an additional NRC-arranged public meeting is warranted at this time in the Pilgrim Station vicinity.

D. Parrish

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I appreciate the opportunity to address your concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact the NRC if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

**/RA/**

Elinor G. Adensam, Director  
Project Directorate I  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

I appreciate the opportunity to address your concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact the NRC if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

**/RA/**

Elinor G. Adensam, Director  
Project Directorate I  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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