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December 3, 1987

The Honorable John Kerry  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kerry:

I am responding to your October 23, 1987 letter, in which you urged the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to convene a formal and comprehensive hearing on the restart of the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station. The Commission is fully aware of public concern regarding restart of the Pilgrim facility and has gone to unusual lengths to assure broad public participation in the restart decision.

The NRC staff and State and local officials in Massachusetts have engaged in a continuing dialogue on the Pilgrim situation. This dialogue has included at least three public meetings with the Plymouth Board of Selectmen, as well as meetings with the Plymouth Chamber of Commerce, the Duxbury Board of Selectmen, the Massachusetts Joint Committee on Energy, the Massachusetts Legislative Committee on the Investigation and Study of the Pilgrim Station, the Town of Plymouth Advisory Committee on Nuclear Matters, and others. Most recently, the NRC staff participated in a public forum on the Pilgrim situation at the Duxbury High School on October 29, 1987. This meeting was sponsored by the Duxbury Board of Selectmen.

Representatives from some of these groups also have participated in NRC Region I management meetings dealing with the Pilgrim facility, including the Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) meeting held on May 7, 1987. On October 8, 1987, the NRC met with representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in our Region I office. This meeting, which was open for public observation, was held to discuss agenda items proposed by the Commonwealth, including emergency preparedness issues, the status of various NRC technical reviews, and inspection activities expected in the next few months.

As the NRC proceeds with deliberations regarding restart of the Pilgrim reactor, additional public meetings will be held in lieu of the evidentiary hearing you have requested. These meetings will be transcribed sessions and will provide an opportunity for the public's comments to be heard by NRC management. The following meetings are planned:

(Originated by RWessman, NRR)

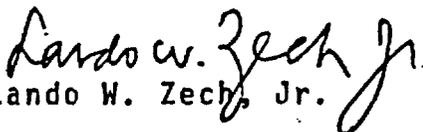
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1. A meeting will be held in the Plymouth area to receive public comments on the Boston Edison Restart Plan. The Restart Plan was recently received by the staff and a meeting will be scheduled after the NRC has placed it in local libraries for public review. NRC staff will also accept written statements from those unable to attend the meeting. NRC will consider these comments, as appropriate, for enhancing NRC review and inspection activities.
2. A second public meeting will be held in the Plymouth area to discuss the disposition of comments and concerns raised during the first meeting.
3. Before an NRC position on restart of the plant is developed in final form, a public meeting will be held between NRC senior staff and State Senator William Golden and the other petitioners who submitted the July 1986 10 CFR 2.206 Petition. This meeting will address NRC's actions regarding the Pilgrim plant and answer questions of the petitioners.

Other public meetings, including those with Boston Edison, will be held as circumstances warrant. These meetings will be announced pursuant to NRC staff policy on open meetings (43 FR 28058). After the staff completes its reviews and before the NRC allows Pilgrim to restart, the Commission will hold a public meeting to be briefed by the licensee and the NRC staff on the readiness of Pilgrim to resume operations.

The Commission believes it has demonstrated its commitment to comprehensive public participation in the Pilgrim restart decision. Moreover, it is our view that when the series of planned public meetings is completed, we will have heard and considered the views of more concerned citizens than would have been likely in a formal hearing.

Sincerely,

  
Lando W. Zech, Jr.