March 31, 2005

The Honorable John W. Scibak
Massachusetts House of Representatives
State House, Room 33
Second Hampshire District
Boston, MA 02133-1053

Dear Mr. Scibak:

On behalf of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter of February 9, 2005, regarding spent nuclear fuel storage at the former Yankee Rowe Nuclear Power Station and interim storage of spent nuclear fuel in an Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI).

First let me assure you that the NRC takes very seriously the safeguards and physical security of spent nuclear fuel. As a result of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the NRC began a through review to re-evaluate all NRC physical security programs for civilian nuclear facilities, including the former Yankee Rowe Nuclear Power Station. As part of this review, the NRC has undertaken several studies to examine the potential vulnerabilities of spent nuclear fuel storage, in light of the current threat environment. These assessments specifically evaluated two different threat scenarios: a large aircraft impact similar in magnitude to the attacks on September 11, 2001, and ground assaults using expanded adversary characteristics consistent with the threat of radiological sabotage. The specific results of these studies are sensitive information and may not be released to the general public. These evaluations indicate that the spent fuel is safe and secure and it is very unlikely that a substantial release of radioactivity would occur from an attack on a dry spent fuel storage cask.

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, the NRC has been aggressively enhancing security measures at nuclear facilities. The NRC has issued Orders to all ISFSIs' and other key nuclear facilities requiring implementation of enhanced security measures based on the threat environment. Copies of these Orders (October 17, 2002, Interim Compensatory Measures and August 18, 2004, Additional Security Measures) were also provided to the governor appointed State Liaison Officer. Although the details of specific security requirements are sensitive, they include such things as additional personnel access controls; enhanced requirements for guard forces; increased stand-off distances for searches of vehicles approaching nuclear facilities; and heightened coordination with appropriate local, State, and Federal authorities. I am enclosing for your information a copy of "Protecting Our Nation," which describes the numerous initiatives NRC has taken since September 11, 2001, to enhance safety, security, and emergency preparedness.

Through coordination with DHS, intelligence and law enforcement communities, NRC evaluates the current threat environment and will initiate additional security actions to all licensees as necessary and appropriate. The actions taken to date to enhance security at the former Yankee Rowe Nuclear Power Station continue to provide high assurance of adequate protection of the public health and safety and protection of the common defense and security.

If the NRC can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Roy Zimmerman, Director, Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response of my staff at (301) 415-8003.

Sincerely,

/RA/
Luis A Reyes
Executive Director
for Operations

Enclosure: As stated

cc w/encl: Cristine McCombs, Director
State Liaison of Massachusetts

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Sincerely,

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