

July 21, 2010

The Honorable John F. Kerry
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kerry:

On behalf of the U.S Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your June 8, 2010, letter requesting an update on the status of the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant license renewal application and a timeframe for when the review will be completed.

The NRC has issued 59 renewed licenses at 34 sites and currently has 14 license renewal applications under review. Pilgrim is one of only three applications that has exceeded our goal of completing contested proceedings within 30 months. This has occurred, in part, because of the complexity of the contested issues. Currently, only one contested issue is pending resolution before the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB). The Commission reversed the ASLB decision on that issue on March 26, 2010, and remanded it to the ASLB for a hearing. The Commission dismissed all other issues raised on appeal on June 17, 2010.

Before the ASLB can set a schedule for consideration of the remanded matter, the Commission must act upon a June 10, 2010, decision by one of the ASLB judges to deny a motion by Pilgrim Watch for his disqualification. NRC regulations require Commission review of decisions denying motions for disqualification. Once the Commission acts upon the judge's decision, the ASLB will establish a hearing schedule and proceed with resolution of the remanded issue. A party adversely affected by the ASLB's ruling would be able to appeal the decision to the Commission.

NRC's regulations authorize Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant to continue to operate in accordance with its current license during the pendency of the renewal application review. These regulations also permit operation beyond the expiration of the current license if a final determination on Pilgrim's license renewal application has not yet been made.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Ms. Rebecca L. Schmidt, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Gregory B. Jaczko