

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

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PAPER NUMBER: LTR-12-0026 **LOGGING DATE:** 01/19/2012
ACTION OFFICE: SECY/EDO

AUTHOR: Michael Costello
AFFILIATION: MA-SH
ADDRESSEE: CHRM Gregory Jaczko
SUBJECT: Expresses concern for the public safety of people and businesses in light of information about the Seabrook nuclear power plant

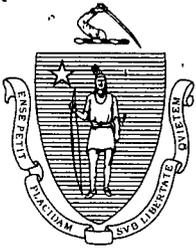
ACTION: *SECY:* Signature of Secretary / *EDO:* *Direct Reply*
DISTRIBUTION: EDO, RF

LETTER DATE: 01/19/2012
ACKNOWLEDGED: No
SPECIAL HANDLING: 2 Part Assignment - SECY/EDO - see below.

NOTES:

1. SECY will prepare Exparte response for Signature of the Secretary explaining why the Chairman is not responding due to ongoing adjudicatory case on Seabrook LR, but referring to staff for reply.
2. To EDO for Direct Reply for response to technical issues, e.g., concrete...model this response after ltr (LTR-12-0004) from MA State Sen. Steven Baddour dtd 12/14/11 and the response prepared by OGC/SECY...Due date: 2/28/2012.

FILE LOCATION: ADAMS
DATE DUE: 02/28/2012 **DATE SIGNED:**



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1020

MICHAEL A. COSTELLO
REPRESENTATIVE
1ST ESSEX DISTRICT

AMESBURY
NEWBURYPORT
SALISBURY

Committee on:
Financial Services
Chairman

ROOM 254, STATE HOUSE
TEL. (617) 722-2220
FAX (617) 722-2821

The Honorable Greg Jaczko
Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Chairman Jaczko:

I am writing to express my deep concern for the public safety of the people and businesses of my district in light of disturbing new information that has come to light this year about the Seabrook nuclear power plant. As the State Representative for the First Essex District that includes the communities of Amesbury, Newburyport, and Salisbury, it is my responsibility to raise what I believe is a serious public safety issue for the people of my district and the thousands of people who visit the region annually as tourists.

According to a NRC report issued on May 23, 2011, the Seabrook plant has experienced concrete degradation due to years of groundwater infiltration. Specifically, the NRC's inspection team identified degradation characterized as "moderate to severe." The damage was found during a below-grade inspection to the accessible portion of the foundation, including electrical control tunnel B - a safety structure with vital electric cables that support the cooling system should a meltdown occur. The report indicates that because of the degradation there has been a substantial decrease in the strength and integrity of the concrete. I commend your inspection team for its vigilance in identifying this significant problem.

It is very disturbing, however, that the NRC had to concede that it does not know the scope and severity of the degradation throughout the plant's foundation. I believe the NRC recognizes the importance of the foundation's integrity. In November 2011, the NRC notified other nuclear power plants that have concrete foundations similar to the one at Seabrook to be vigilant about this issue.

While I appreciate these initial protective steps, I am concerned - as are my constituents - that the plant's operators are rushing to relicense Seabrook. Given our mutual concerns regarding the structural integrity of the foundation at Seabrook, I urge the NRC to take the following action steps:

- Halt relicensing until the Agency fully and comprehensively assesses the problem.
- Require the Seabrook operators to fix both the degraded concrete and abate the groundwater infiltration.
- Ensure that this problem is sufficiently resolved using tests and first-hand inspections over a multi-year time frame.

Finally, Seabrook Station should not be considered for relicensing based on the "aging management plan" submitted by the Seabrook operators; a paperwork promise to fix the plant is simply not adequate for a matter of this dimension.

There are 18 years left before the current operating expires, and I do not believe, given the recently identified problems at the plant, that re-licensing should proceed. The alkali-silica reaction is a new, thorny problem that your staff has thankfully identified, but will require years of intensive research, assessment, and monitoring before relicensing should be even considered.

The safety of the people, businesses, and tourists of Massachusetts' First Essex District is of paramount importance and they deserve complete assurance that there will be no need for Seabrook's emergency sirens to sound the warning to evacuate their communities.

Thank you for your continued vigilance in protecting public safety. I look forward to your detailed response and to working with you on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Costello', written in a cursive style.

Michael A. Costello
State Representative