

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

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PAPER NUMBER: LTR-12-0032

LOGGING DATE: 01/25/2012

ACTION OFFICE:

SECY

EDO

AUTHOR:

Deborah Carey

AFFILIATION:

MA

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:

Signature of Secretary

SECY:

EDO:

/ Direct Reply

DISTRIBUTION:

RF

LETTER DATE:

12/27/2011

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...model this response after ltr (LTR-12-0004) from MA State Sen. Steven Baddour dtd 12/14/11 and the response that was prepared by OGC/SECY...Due date: 02/24/2012.

FILE LOCATION:

ADAMS

DATE DUE:

02/24/2012

DATE SIGNED:

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

Dear Chairman Jaczko:

I am writing to you 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 about the Seabrook nuclear power plant this year. As the State Senator from Massachusetts' First Essex District that includes the communities of Amesbury, Haverhill, Merrimac, Methuen, Newburyport, North Andover (Precincts 1; 4, 6 and 8) and Salisbury, it is my responsibility to speak up on behalf of the public safety of the people of my district.

According to a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) report issued on May 23, 2011, the Seabrook plant has experienced concrete degradation due to groundwater infiltration that has been going on for years. Specifically, your inspection team identified concrete degradation that the report 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--safety structure with vital electric cables that support the cooling system should a meltdown occur. Your report indicates that 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.

But, it is very disturbing that the NRC had to concede that it does not know the scope and severity of the degradation throughout the plant's foundation. As the people of my communities know, a building is no stronger than its foundation. Apparently, the NRC agrees because in November 2011, you notified other nuclear power plants that there are emerging concerns with the type of concrete used at the Seabrook plant and about which they should be vigilant.

While I appreciate these protective steps, I am concerned—as are my constituents—that the plant's operators are rushing to relicense Seabrook. Specifically, I urge the NRC to

- Halt relicensing while the agency fully and comprehensively assesses the problem; and.
- Not relicense the plant based on a paperwork aging management plan submitted by the Seabrook operators.

On behalf of the public's safety, the Seabrook operators should gladly fix both the degraded concrete and abate the groundwater infiltration. The NRC should test the results over a sustained number of years to ensure that a new problem of this dimension is completely resolved. A paperwork promise to fix the plant is simply not adequate for this matter.

There are 18 years left before the current operating expires, and I am mystified—given the aging problems already evident at this specific nuclear plant—why the relicensing would 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.

As I am sure that you agree, the people and businesses of the 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah Carey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Deborah" is written with a large, prominent "D" and the last name "Carey" follows in a similar cursive script.

Deborah Carey

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HON. GREG. JACZKO
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