

February 6, 2012

Senator Steven Baddour
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Room 208, State House
Boston, MA 02133-1053

Dear Senator Baddour:

On behalf of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter dated December 14, 2011. In your letter, you expressed concerns regarding the concrete degradation noted at Seabrook Station due to an Alkali-Silica Reaction (ASR), and urged the agency to take several steps to fully address the matter to ensure the safety of your constituents in the future.

Be assured that the NRC is thoroughly evaluating this technical issue. While the longer-term implications of this issue are being evaluated by NRC staff here in Region I, as well as the technical staff in our headquarters office, this matter has been assessed by NextEra and the NRC to ensure that the current safety of the facility remains assured. To date, these engineering reviews have indicated that the station structures most affected by ASR degradation remain capable of carrying out their safety function.

Notwithstanding the above, the agency has a number of questions regarding the long-term aging management plan for the ASR issue. As a result, the issuance of a Safety Evaluation Report by the agency in support of license renewal has been pushed back many months. No decision on license renewal can be made until the extent of the concrete degradation is fully understood. NextEra has committed to provide a long-term plan, as well as its technical basis, by March of 2012. This long-term aging management plan will be based on physical test results of concrete core samples taken from affect areas of the facility, as well as other civil engineering evaluations. While this plan remains under development, the NRC has inspected elements of NextEra's technical work in this matter to date. The results of that inspection are due to be published publicly in the next 30 days or so.

As indicated above, there is no indication that the ASR issue has rendered any structure at Seabrook Station incapable of performing its safety function at this time. As such, there is no current need to repair any structures at Seabrook Station. The effectiveness of the long-term aging management plan, including measures to reduce groundwater intrusion, as well as future structural examinations, will determine whether any future structural repairs are necessary.

Senator Baddour

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Your interest in this matter is shared by other elected officials and public interest groups in your area as well. For example, we recently received letters from Congressman Edward Markey and the C-10 Research and Education Foundation on this issue. I have attached our agency's response to each party's letter for your information. We intend to keep the public fully informed of our review and inspection results in this matter going forward. If you have further questions in this matter, please contact me at 610-337-5299.

Sincerely,

/RA/

William M. Dean
Regional Administrator

Enclosures:

- 1) Letter to Congressman Edward Markey dated December 22, 2011
- 2) Letter to Sandra Gavutis, Executive Director – C-10 Research and Education Foundation

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