



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

April 30, 2012

Mr. Thomas O'Brien
60 Pleasant Street
P.O. Box 550
Newburyport, MA 01950

Dear Mr. O'Brien and Council Members:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter of March 12, 2012, to Chairman Gregory Jaczko expressing your concerns about the Seabrook Station license renewal. In your letter, you detailed your City Council's concerns regarding the concrete degradation noted at the 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 ASR degradation at Seabrook Station. The NRC has determined that even though the mechanical properties of concrete (such as compressive strength and stiffness) have been reduced or degraded, there is no indication that the ASR issue has rendered any structure at Seabrook Station incapable of performing its safety function at this time.

The NRC has multiple processes to evaluate the adequacy of current plant operations and licensing bases. Should the NRC become aware at any time of information calling into question the continued safe operation of any nuclear power plant, including Seabrook Station, the NRC will take the appropriate actions as part of the agency's ongoing safety oversight, regardless of whether those plants have or are seeking a renewed license.

A license renewal review is not a re-review of the licensing basis, rather, it is focused on managing the age-related degradation of passive systems, structures, and components to ensure they will fulfill their safety-related functions, as specified in the current licensing basis. Therefore, any age-related degradation of systems, structures, or components in a plant's aging management plan will be evaluated by the applicant and reviewed by the NRC staff as part of the license renewal process.

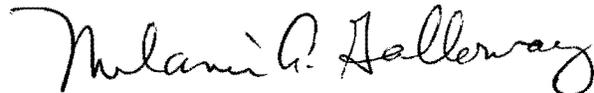
With regard to the Seabrook Station license renewal application, no decision on whether a renewed license will be or will not be granted has been made because the NRC's review is ongoing. The original NRC review schedule for license renewal has been delayed by 11 months due to the ASR issue as reflected in our letter dated July 12, 2011 (ADAMS Accession No. ML11178A365). Further, the applicant (NextEra Energy Seabrook, LLC or NextEra) has not sufficiently described the actions and technical basis to adequately manage the long-term aging effects of ASR on structures that are or may become affected by ASR. Until such information has been provided and found acceptable by the NRC, a renewed license cannot be issued to Seabrook Station.

On April 23, 2012, NRC staff held a public meeting with NextEra, at NRC headquarters in Rockville, Maryland. During the meeting, NRC staff presented its current assessment of the ASR-affected structures as operable but degraded, and posed questions to the applicant regarding the condition of the concrete, continued operability, monitoring/managing plans, and schedule for submittal of a corrective action plan to address the issue. NextEra discussed the impact that the ASR has on the plant and addressed its ongoing monitoring and testing programs. NextEra also indicated that it will provide additional information, including its engineering evaluation, plans, and milestones to address the issue in May 2012.

The staff plans to hold an additional public meeting on ASR near Seabrook Station after the NRC has reviewed and evaluated additional information to be submitted by the applicant in May.

In summary, the NRC is committed to ensuring the continued safe operation of U.S. nuclear power plants, including Seabrook Station.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Melanie A. Galloway". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Melanie A. Galloway, Acting Director
Division of License Renewal
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

On April 23, 2012, NRC staff held a public meeting with the applicant, at its headquarters in Rockville, Maryland. During the meeting, NRC staff presented its current assessment of the ASR-affected structures as operable but degraded, and posed questions to the applicant regarding the condition of the concrete, continued operability, monitoring/managing plans, and schedule for submittal of a corrective action plan to address the issue. The applicant discussed the impact that the ASR has on the plant and addressed its ongoing monitoring and testing programs. The applicant also indicated that it will provide additional information, including its engineering evaluation, plans, and milestones to address the issue in May 2012.

The staff plans to hold an additional public meeting on ASR near Seabrook Station after the NRC has reviewed and evaluated additional information to be submitted by the applicant in May.

In summary, the NRC is committed to ensuring the continued safe operation of U.S. nuclear power plants. Further, the NRC has the necessary regulatory tools to require changes to existing licenses should the agency determine that changes are necessary.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Melanie A. Galloway, Acting Director
Division of License Renewal
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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See next page

ADAMS Accession Nos. : ML12094a099 (Pkg.); ML12094A116 (Incoming):
ML12087a315(Response)

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Letter to T. O'Brien from M. Galloway dated April 30, 2012

SUBJECT: SEABROOK STATION LICENSE RENEWAL

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