



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

April 3, 2012

SECRETARY

Thomas F. O'Brien
President
Newburyport City Council
Newburyport City Hall
60 Pleasant Street
P.O. Box 550
Newburyport, MA 01950

SUBJECT: SEABROOK NUCLEAR POWER STATION

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 B. Jaczko in which you requested that the NRC require Seabrook Nuclear Power Station's owner/operator to repair the concrete and abate the groundwater infiltration before considering relicensing the reactor. You also enclosed a unanimous resolution of the City Council to this effect.

To the extent that your letter requests that the Commission halt the relicensing of Seabrook, the Commission cannot respond. Under Commission regulations, the Commission has an adjudicatory role in the Seabrook license renewal proceeding. Matters related to Seabrook's license renewal application are currently pending before an Atomic Safety and Licensing Board. Additional matters could come before the Commission in its adjudicatory capacity in the future. Therefore, it would be inappropriate for the Commission to comment on your request to halt relicensing of Seabrook.

To the extent your letter raises concerns about assessment of, repair, and aging management of the concrete degradation at Seabrook, I am referring your letter to the technical staff to provide a response.

Please be assured that should information at any time show that there is a basis to question the continued safe operation of Seabrook, the NRC will take appropriate action as part of the agency's ongoing safety oversight.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrew L. Bates".

Andrew L. Bates
Acting Secretary of the Commission



CITY OF NEWBURYPORT

CITY COUNCIL

NEWBURYPORT CITY HALL

60 PLEASANT STREET

P.O. Box 550

NEWBURYPORT, MA 01950

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March 12, 2012

Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Chairman Gregory B. Jaczko
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Dear Chairman Jaczko,

On January 30, 2012 the City Council of the Newburyport voted unanimously to adopt the enclosed Resolution with respect to the relicensing of the Seabrook Station. As members of the Newburyport City Council, we feel we have a responsibility to address public safety matters on behalf of the residents, visitors, and businesses in our community. Accordingly, we wish to inform the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) of our deep concern about current safety risks posed by the Seabrook nuclear power plant. *Specifically, we are concerned about significant degradation of concrete in the nuclear power plant structure due to unabated groundwater infiltration and the admission by the NRC that the full of extent of this problem is unknown.*

It is of the utmost importance in the case of the Seabrook reactor that the NRC not relicense this facility based on an "aging management plan" submitted to and approved by the NRC. The scope and complexity of the corrective measures at Seabrook Station warrant that the reactor's owner/operator repair the concrete and abate the groundwater infiltration before the NRC considers relicensing. *The NRC should not accept a paperwork promise to fix the plant as the basis of relicensing.*

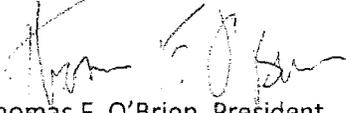
The NRC should, instead, strengthen its oversight of Seabrook Station. We appreciate that the NRC inspection team reported the degradation to the public. We are, however, justifiably concerned that the groundwater infiltration and resulting structural concrete degradation have gone on *for years*—by the NRC's own account—without being fully addressed.

The NRC has now described concrete degradation as "severe", finding a twenty-two percent (22%) reduction in compression strength only halfway through the plant's current operating license. Clearly, the processes leading to this degradation did not occur overnight. Thus, it is reasonable to expect the NRC to determine if on-site inspections have adhered to existing protocols in every respect and, further, to determine if the inspection protocols themselves are adequate. For the sake of safety and transparency, it is also reasonable to ask the NRC to distribute their findings to the public.

Our constituents know that a building is no stronger than its foundation. We, and many constituents, are concerned that the NRC and Seabrook's owner/operator are rushing to relicense this nuclear power plant without first guaranteeing the long-term stability and safety of the facility. With 18 years left on the current license, there is absolutely no reason for the NRC to accelerate the relicensure process.

Our constituents deserve complete assurance that the significant problems the NRC has reported will not result in Seabrook's sirens warning us to evacuate this great city.

Respectfully submitted by,



Thomas F. O'Brien, President
and Members of the Newburyport City Council

TFO/lmv

Enclosure

CITY OF NEWBURYPORT



IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDERED:

Date:
January 30, 2012

RESOLUTION ON SEABROOK STATION RELICENSING

Whereas, in May 2011, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission(NRC) reported that concrete degradation caused by an alkali-silica reaction had significantly weakened foundation structures at the Seabrook nuclear power plant; and

Whereas, the NRC has stated that such degradation has affected a safety structure at the plant; and

Whereas, the NRC admitted it did not know the extent and severity of the degradation throughout the plant's foundation where groundwater has saturated the concrete; and

Whereas, Seabrook Station is the only commercial reactor in the United States with confirmed structural concrete degradation affecting a safety structure; and

Whereas, in light of this condition, the NRC has notified all commercial reactors in the United States to search for similar concrete degradation due to alkali-silica reaction; and

Whereas, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has the primary responsibility to regulate commercial nuclear reactor operations and protect public safety related to said operations;

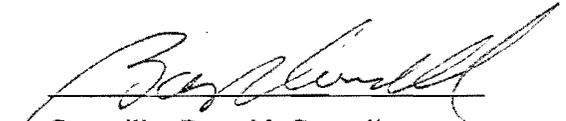
Therefore, be it resolved that the Newburyport City Council request the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to take the following steps:

- Immediately halt all relicensing activities related to Seabrook Station;
- Conduct peer-reviewed studies of the reactor's ability to withstand seismic activity with compromised structural concrete, and publicly report the results of these studies;
- Fully investigate the causes of the unabated groundwater infiltration and resulting concrete degradation, and publicly report the results of such investigation;
- Devise a corrective action program to address both groundwater infiltration and concrete degradation throughout the facility;
- Require the owner and operator of Seabrook Station to take corrective measures to stop groundwater infiltration and related concrete degradation;
- Inspect and monitor the results of those corrective measures over a *sustained* (multiyear) period of time to ensure that corrective measures are effective;

- If, following corrective measures and sustained monitoring, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission determines that degradation of safety structures has not abated, that it suspend the license to operate Seabrook Station until safe operation of this reactor can be assured.


Councillor Kathleen O'Connor Ives

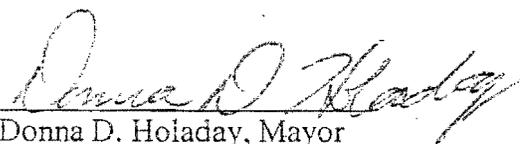

Councillor Edward C. Cameron

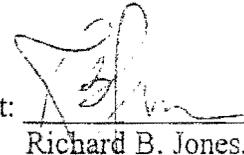

Councillor Barry N. Connell


Councillor Robert J. Cronin

In City Council January 30, 2012

Motion to approve by Councillor Connell, seconded by Councillor Cameron. Roll call vote, 10 yes, 1 absent (Heartquist). So voted.

Approve: 
Donna D. Holaday, Mayor

Attest: 
Richard B. Jones, City Clerk

Date: 2/15/2012