

February 27, 2015

Ms. Helen Grimm, RN, BSN
School Nurse
PO Box 276
North Truro, MA 02652

SUBJECT: SAFETY AND EVACUATION PLANNING CONCERNS FOR TRUTO
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN AND DECOMMISSIONING OF THE
PILGRIM NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Dear Ms. Grimm:

I am responding to your letter dated January 6, 2015 (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System, Accession No. ML15015A328), to Chairman MacFarlane regarding safety concerns and evacuation planning for the elementary school children in Truro, Massachusetts. You expressed concern regarding the safety of Cape Cod residents and, in particular, children in the unlikely event of a severe accident at the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is committed to ensuring public health and safety, and the safe operation of nuclear power plants within the United States.

The Commission has defined two emergency planning zones (EPZs) around each nuclear plant. The exact size and configuration of these zones may vary from plant to plant due to local emergency response needs and capabilities, demography, topography, land characteristics, access routes, and jurisdictional boundaries. The two EPZs are the plume exposure pathway EPZ, and the ingestion exposure pathway EPZ.

The plume exposure pathway EPZ is an area of approximately 10 miles in radius around each nuclear power plant. Site-specific, pre-determined emergency plans are in place for this EPZ and include provisions for protective actions designed to avoid or reduce dose from exposure to radioactive materials in the unlikely event of a radiological emergency. These actions include evacuation, sheltering, and the use of potassium iodide, where appropriate. The extensive planning for the 10-mile EPZ is flexible enough to allow for expansion beyond this distance, should the need arise.

The ingestion exposure pathway EPZ is an area of approximately 50 miles in radius around each nuclear power plant. State and local emergency plans are in place for this EPZ as well, and include provisions to avoid or reduce dose from the possible ingestion of radioactive materials that could contaminate water and food sources as the result of a radiological emergency. Because radioactive iodine exposure is predominantly through ingestion, restrictions may be placed on the consumption of certain food, water, and milk are an effective protective measure to prevent radioactive iodine uptake and subsequent exposure to the thyroid gland.

H. Grimm

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Please be assured that we take your concerns very seriously, and are committed to ensuring that our licensees have sound emergency planning in place. If you need any additional information, please contact Ms. Patricia Milligan, Senior Level Advisor for emergency preparedness at (301) 287-3739.

Sincerely,

/RA/ James W. Andersen for

Robert J. Lewis, Director
Division of Preparedness and Response
Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response

cc: Nancy McNamara, Region I
John Giarrusso, MEMA
Steve Colman, FEMA Region I

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