



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

September 21, 2015

SECRETARY

The Honorable George K. Heartwell  
Mayor of the City of Grand Rapids  
300 Monroe Avenue, N.W.  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

Dear Mayor Heartwell:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter dated July 30, 2015. In your letter, you expressed concern about the reactor pressure vessel at Entergy's Palisades Nuclear Plant, which is located within fifty miles of Grand Rapids. Specifically, your letter requests that the NRC require the licensee, Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc., to conduct direct testing of physical samples from the Palisades reactor, rather than use mathematical interpolations from other nuclear plants. Along those lines, your letter recommended that the Commission uphold the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board's recent decision to hold an evidentiary hearing regarding materials issues associated with Palisades' reactor pressure vessel.

As your letter indicates, a hearing request on this subject is currently pending before the NRC. In March 2015, Beyond Nuclear, Don't Waste Michigan, Michigan Safe Energy Future – Shoreline Chapter, and the Nuclear Energy Information Service (collectively, "the petitioners") sought a hearing on Entergy's license amendment request concerning whether the Palisades' reactor vessel plate and weld materials provide adequate margins of safety against fracture. The Licensing Board granted the petitioners' request for a hearing on June 18, 2015. Entergy has appealed the Board's decision to the Commission; that appeal is pending. Given the pendency of the matter before both the Commission and the Licensing Board, the Commission cannot at this time discuss or comment on any issues involved in this matter. Under NRC regulations, the Commission has an adjudicatory role in this case, and all members of the Commission must remain impartial while the case is pending.

A copy of your letter and this response will be served on all the participants in this and a related *Palisades* proceeding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Annette Vietti - Cook".

Annette L. Vietti-Cook