

# Amesbury

## City Councilor



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Stephen G. Burns, Chairman  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

October 23, 2015

Dear Chairman Burns:

I serve on the City Council of Amesbury, Massachusetts. Our city is located eight miles from Seabrook Station, within the plant's 10-mile emergency evacuation zone.

As a city councilor, my most basic responsibility is to assure the safety of Amesbury's residents. After listening to my constituents, attending U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) public meetings, convening a workshop in Council chambers to hear from a Seabrook plant official and a Seabrook safety organization, I firmly believe that Seabrook Station poses an unacceptable risk to the lives and livelihood of the people of Amesbury and New England. I stand with my colleagues in Newburyport and Salisbury in my concern for public safety, and for these reasons I urge the NRC to close Seabrook nuclear reactor.

**On behalf of public, I urge the NRC to shut down Seabrook Station.**

Specifically, I ask that the NRC withdraw the license to operate Seabrook Station because:

- (1) The plant is at risk of a nuclear incident due to extensive concrete degradation throughout the plant's foundation and safety structures, including the building that houses the nuclear reactor.
- (2) Should an accident, incident, or act of terrorism threatening or leading to a radiation release<sup>1</sup> occur, a safe, timely, and humane evacuation would not be possible.
- (3) I am deeply concerned about the ability of the NRC to conduct adequate oversight of the ASR and other issues.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Radiation could be released into the air from the building that houses the nuclear reactor or other structures, or from the high-level "spent" fuel pool that is located at the Seabrook plant.

<sup>2</sup>We believe that these three points are adequately discussed in detail in the letter sent by four Newburyport City Councilors to the NRC in August 2015.

Although the adequacy of safe and clean energy for the New England grid is not integral to the NRC's mission, I believe that renewable energy including wind and solar, as well as conservation has unlimited potential. Case in point:

Amesbury has participated in a two-year effort to become a Massachusetts Green Community member, a status we achieved in 2013. As a member, we have pledged to find ways to cut our city-wide energy consumption and add renewable energy. Specifically, Amesbury has installed two solar photovoltaic arrays on capped landfills that will produce 9,000 megawatt hours of electricity. From this renewable source, the City of Amesbury will purchase electricity at decreased cost

Amesbury's project obviously will not solve the region's electricity demands. But, we strongly urge the region's electricity planners to *dramatically* ramp up efforts to install more renewable electricity sources for future demand including the steady loss of nuclear plants.

I am inspired by the success stories from places like Germany where nuclear power is being replaced by safe renewable energy. The United States should be able to achieve the same here.

We need to be realistic about the future of nuclear power in New England. Years ago, there were nine nuclear reactors in New England—five have closed including, most recently, Vermont Yankee. Now we know that the Pilgrim plant will also close. That is wonderful news especially since the NRC lists Pilgrim among the three worst in the nation—and that is after the NRC has provided the plant with years of enhanced oversight.

If the NRC is unable to turn around the Pilgrim plant, it is less likely to safely resolve the progression of alkali-silica reaction (ASR) that has caused "degradation" throughout the concrete foundation and structures at Seabrook Station. ASR is a completely novel problem to any US nuclear power plant, and is novel to the NRC staff as well. Both the plant staff and the NRC are operating in uncharted waters, placing my constituents at a high degree of risk of a nuclear incident.

In 2014, the Amesbury City Council *unanimously* expressed concern about the safety of the Seabrook plant. With additional time to digest scientific data and other information on Seabrook Station, I feel compelled to call upon the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to shut down Seabrook Station.

As an Amesbury city councilor, my top priority is and must be for the safety and health of my constituents and the safety of their businesses

Finally, I strongly urge the NRC to convene the spring 2016 Annual Assessment Meeting on Seabrook Station in Massachusetts. These important meetings have never been held in Massachusetts, although sixty thousand citizens reside in the Massachusetts evacuation zone. It would be appropriate to convene the next Annual Assessment in Massachusetts to provide better access to our residents and legislators.

Thank you.

  
Anne Ferguson, Member, Amesbury City Council

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