



**UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**  
REGION I  
2100 RENAISSANCE BLVD.  
KING OF PRUSSIA, PA 19406-2713

October 5, 2016

Mr. Don Barton  
Mr. William Maurer  
Ms. Diane Turco  
Cape Downwinders  
PO Box 303  
South Harwich, MA 02661

Dear Mr. Barton, Mr. Maurer and Ms. Turco:

I am responding to your letter dated August 21, 2016, requesting that Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant be shut down based on its recent operating performance. The NRC shares your concern regarding the safety impact of the degraded performance at Pilgrim. As you know, on September 1, 2015, the NRC issued a "White" finding and Notice of Violation to Pilgrim because Entergy had not adequately addressed a significant equipment problem that caused a failure of one of the plant's safety relief valves in February 2013, and then caused a similar failure in January 2015. This issue combined with a failure to adequately address the causes of multiple reactor shutdowns at Pilgrim in 2013 were indications of degrading performance that moved the plant into Column 4 (the "Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone" Column) of the NRC Action Matrix.

Based on our inspection and oversight program to date, we continue to conclude that Pilgrim is operating safely. While the issues that moved the plant into Column 4 were of low to moderate safety significance, the increased oversight, inspection, and assessment directed by the assessment process for a plant in Column 4 now allows us to closely monitor for indications of unacceptable performance. If at any time it is determined that performance at Pilgrim has declined to an unacceptable level, the NRC will not hesitate to take additional regulatory action, up to and including the issuance of a shutdown order. More information regarding our additional oversight activities at Pilgrim is also available at the following website: <http://www.nrc.gov/info-finder/reactors/pilg/special-oversight.html>.

We are aware of the recent events regarding the main steam isolation valve testing failure that you described in your letter and are also sensitive to what this issue potentially indicates regarding Pilgrim's progress in addressing its performance issues. Following the event, our inspectors determined that operators isolated the affected line in accordance with the plant's technical specification requirements, which placed the plant in a safe condition. Any potential performance issues associated with this event are currently under inspection. The results of the inspection will be documented in an upcoming inspection report and, as applicable, will be considered during our assessment of overall performance at the site.

We hope that this addresses your concerns regarding the NRC's actions in response to the recent degrading performance at Pilgrim. However, if you have any additional questions or concerns regarding these issues please feel free to contact Diane Screnci at 610-337-5330 or Neil Sheehan at 610-337-5331.

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Leonard M. Cline  
Senior Project Engineer  
Division of Reactor Projects

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Division of Reactor Projects

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