

October 30, 2018

Kristine L. Svinicki, Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Mail Stop O-16G4
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

Dear Chairman Svinicki:

I am writing to reaffirm my deep concerns regarding the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station (“Pilgrim”) in Plymouth, Massachusetts and to urge the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to exercise its responsibility to ensure the safety of nuclear plant operations, particularly in light of recent events.

On October 5, 2018, Pilgrim went into an unplanned automatic shutdown when a valve that regulates water flow into the reactor unexpectedly closed, causing a drop in reactor water level.¹ This is the latest in several shutdowns that occurred at Pilgrim in this year alone. As of October 9, 2018, Pilgrim had been offline 57 days.²

It is clear that Entergy’s modifications have not gone far enough to maintain safe operations at the plant during its last full calendar year of operation. Given Pilgrim’s status placement in Column 4 of the NRC’s Oversight Process Action Matrix - the lowest safety designation a plant can receive without being required to shut down - and its repetitive safety failures and unscheduled shut downs,³ it is deeply alarming that the NRC has not taken additional steps to ensure that Entergy is safely operating the Pilgrim plant. The plant is also listed as the worst performed of the nation’s 98-reactor commercial fleet.⁴

These shutdowns and safety disturbances are even impacting the company’s bottom line. Local news sources have reported that the Entergy Corporation has lost “about \$64 million in gross revenue and \$32 million in net revenue...because of equipment problems since January.”⁵

¹ The Cape Cod Times, “Plagued by shutdowns, Pilgrim losing millions in its final year,” Christine Legere, October 9, 2018, <https://www.enterpriseneews.com/news/20181009/plagued-by-shutdowns-pilgrim-losing-millions-in-its-final-year>.

² *Ibid*

³ WBUR, “Pilgrim Has Already Been Shut Down More Days This Year Than The Prior 4 Years Combined,” Bruce Gellerman, May 3, 2018, <http://www.wbur.org/bostonmix/2018/05/03/pilgrim-has-already-been-shut-down-more-days-this-year-than-the-prior-4-years-combined>; Letter from Massachusetts political leadership to former NRC Chairman Stephen G. Burns, January 4, 2017, <https://www.markey.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/17.01.04%20-%20NRC%20Letter.pdf>.

⁴ The Cape Cod Times, “Plagued by shutdowns, Pilgrim losing millions in its final year,” Christine Legere, October 9, 2018, <https://www.enterpriseneews.com/news/20181009/plagued-by-shutdowns-pilgrim-losing-millions-in-its-final-year>.

⁵ *Ibid*

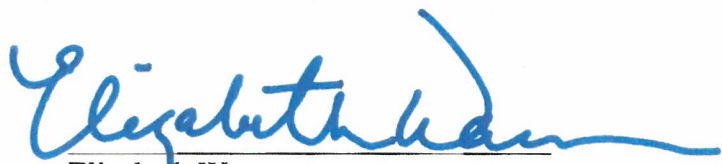
I have written to the NRC five times regarding Pilgrim's safety concerns. Most recently, I joined members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation to express our concern about several incidents of loss of offsite power (LOOP) that resulted in operational shutdowns following Winter Storm Juno in 2015.⁶ In response to our questions regarding the steps Pilgrim took to prevent future emergency shutdowns, you stated that, Entergy "made plant switchyard modifications and plant procedure changes" which the NRC determined to be "acceptable."⁷

However, the NRC has consistently given Entergy a pass on implementing other key safety measures. The NRC gave Pilgrim a third extension on a full implementation of the federal cybersecurity plan to December 31, 2020,⁸ after granting two previous extensions in 2014 and 2016.⁹ It has also provided exemptions to mandatory security measures that were implemented following by the NRC.¹⁰ These exemptions include critical upgrades to vent systems and cybersecurity measures, seismic and flooding risk reevaluations,¹¹ and emergency planning zone requirements.¹² Time and time again, the NRC have ignored critical discrepancies in safety measures and put Massachusetts residents at risk.

You have stated that the NRC "continually assesses Entergy's performance at Pilgrim, and if at any time it is determined that performance at Pilgrim has declined to an unacceptable level with respect to public safety, the NRC will not hesitate to take additional regulatory action, up to and including the issuance of a shutdown order."¹³ It is of utmost importance that the NRC monitor and address continuing safety concerns both before the plant closes in June 2019 and as it is decommissioned in 2020.

The health and well-being of our constituents depends on the NRC's commitment to establishing standards that keep plants functioning safely and to ensuring that operators continually meet those standards. I look forward to your response and appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

⁶ Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Edward Markey, and Congressman William Keating to NRC Chair Kristine Svinicki, February 12, 2018

⁷ Response Letter from Chair to NRC Chair Kristine Svinicki to Senator Warren, March 19, 2018

⁸ Cape Cod Times, "Feds: No cyber upgrade for Pilgrim," Christine Legere, December 19, 2017, <https://www.capecodtimes.com/news/20171219/feds-no-cyber-upgrade-for-pilgrim>.

⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰ Cape Cod Times, "Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station Exempted from Regulators as Shutdown Nears," April 17, 2017, <https://www.capecodtimes.com/news/20170417/pilgrim-nuclear-power-station-exempted-from-safety-upgrades>.

¹¹ Associated Press, "Pilgrim nuclear plant exempted from regulations as shutdown nears," April 18, 2017, <https://turnto10.com/news/local/pilgrim-nuclear-plant-exempted-from-regulations-as-shutdown-nears>.

¹² CapeCod.Com, "Entergy Seeks Exemption from Emergency Planning Zone for Pilgrim Plant," July 17, 2018, <https://www.capecod.com/newscenter/entergy-seeks-exemption-from-emergency-planning-zone-for-pilgrim-plant>.

¹³ Response Letter from Chair to NRC Chair Kristine Svinicki to Senator Warren, March 19, 2018