

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2102

One Bowdoin Square
Tenth Floor
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 565-8519

February 15, 1994

Chairman Ivan Selin
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

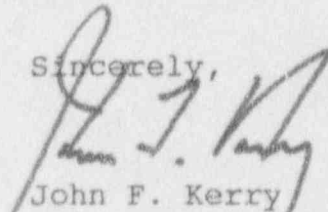
Dear Chairman Selin,

Enclosed please find a copy of a letter I received from Mary Elizabeth Lampert, Chairman of the Duxbury Nuclear Advisory Committee.

Ms. Lampert is concerned about the safety of Boston Edison's plan to dump 75,000 cubic yards of radioactive contaminated sand from the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station at sea.

I would greatly appreciate your responses to the issues raised by Ms. Lampert in her letter to me. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



John F. Kerry
United States Senator

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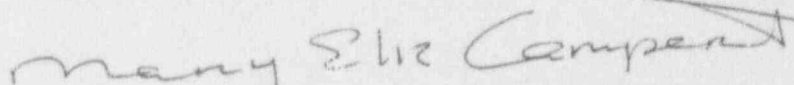
Duxbury Nuclear Advisory Committee
Tremont Street
Duxbury, Massachusetts 02332
December 6, 1993

Senator John Kerry
1 Bowdoin Square
10th Floor
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Senator Kerry:

Enclosed is a letter from the Duxbury Nuclear Advisory Committee to Chairman Ivan Selin, NRC, regarding the disposal of radioactive contaminated sand from Pilgrim's discharge canal. We would greatly appreciate it if you would consider sending a similar request to the NRC. The prestige of your office would greatly enhance our efforts. Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Very truly yours,



Mary Elizabeth Lampert
Chairman

Duxbury Nuclear Advisory Committee
148 Washington Street
Duxbury, Massachusetts 02332
December 1, 1993

Chairman Ivan Selin
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Re: Disposal of Radioactive Contaminated Sand From
Discharge Canal - Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station

Dear Chairman:

The accompanying article, "Pilgrim to send sand to sea" ran in the local press on November 24, 1993. The thought of Boston Edison being allowed to dump 75,000 cubic yards of radioactive contaminated sand from the discharge canal into the sea is, if true, of concern.

According to the article, "One of the 14 tests of the sand showed a minute trace of cobalt-60, which is attributable to the power plants operation". We ask, who determined the amount was "minute" and on what basis? Who did the tests? Were there any other radioactive contaminants? What are the rules and requirements? We need more information. In reviewing Boston Edison's required Annual Environmental Reports, samples taken from the discharge canal have shown radioactive contaminants.

Just recently, the national press lambasted the Russians for disposing of low level radioactive waste off the coast of Japan. The United States and other nations signed an accord banning disposing radioactive waste at sea this fall. Therefore, something is very wrong with this picture; or, as David Tarantino (spokesman for Boston Edison) said at the conclusion of the accompanying article, "We're not dealing with a situation here where rationality always prevails".

We request, as citizens of a seaside community and neighbors of Pilgrim, the NRC holds a public hearing in Plymouth. At the meeting, the detailed plan for testing the material, the role of the NRC, "allowable limits" of residual radioactivity should be clearly explained and justified to the public before the sand is dredged. Only in this way will

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the public feel we are dealing with a situation where
"rationality prevails".

Thank you for your attention to this matter having
considerable and potential health consequences. We look
forward to your response and appreciate your efforts to
involve the public.

Very truly yours,

Mary Elizabeth Lampert
Chair, Duxbury Nuclear Advisory Committee

Pilgrim to send sand out to sea

Not 'suitable' for beaches

By DeWayne Lehman
MPG Newspapers

PLYMOUTH — While towns all along the South Shore lament their sand-starved beaches, plans are being made to haul approximately 75,000 cubic yards of sand to sea for dumping. That's the equivalent of 3,000 to 4,000 semitruck-loads full of sand.

Boston Edison plans to begin dredging the small bay area in front of Pilgrim nuclear power plant next year, and some area officials have been eying the project as a source of free sand to replenish beaches. But despite the depleted condition of many beaches and officials' expressed interest in using the sand, Edison officials say they will load the sand into barges, take it out to sea 40 to 50 miles, and dump it.

The problem, Edison officials said two weeks ago during an editorial staff meeting, is that one of 14 tests of the sand showed a minute trace of cobalt-60, which is attributable to the power plant's nuclear operation. But that indication of nuclear-related radioactivity

was overwhelmed by naturally occurring radiation, they said, and the amount was so small that if a person spent a lifetime drinking water with the same level of cobalt-60, he would take in only a fraction of what the federal government has determined to be safe. According to the Edison officials, advances in testing technology — which analyze material for 12 to 24 hours to determine its radioactivity — are capable of determining much smaller levels than before.

"If we were looking at this (sand) 10 years ago, we probably wouldn't have found this (cobalt-60) because of the technology," said Edward Kraft, vice president of nuclear operations and plant operation. "It's there because the technology is becoming better and better."

Edison officials said despite the interest in the "beautiful" and "clean" sand, putting it on area beaches could create a public relations nightmare and perhaps lead to fiscal suicide.

"By law, if we followed the federal codes, we could do what these people are suggesting," Kraft said, but Edison won't because of the possible criticism and liability that could ensue.

"It's really a tragic situation,"

said Thomas Boulette, senior vice president of nuclear. "We can't afford to do it because we would be opening ourselves up to criticism."

According to Boulette, someone could make an issue out of putting the sand on beaches, forcing Edison to reclaim it. In the process of picking up all the sand, Edison would end up with more than twice as much, he said, and the cost of reclaiming the sand and disposing of it as low-level radioactive waste could be so great as to shut the plant down. Neither Edison officials nor anyone else has come up with a way to reduce the company's liability for the sand, Boulette added.

In explaining the test results, Edison officials said they didn't know the cause of the "very, very small amount" of cobalt-60, which is not normally present in nature. They emphasized a clean history of environmental testing of gardens, produce, and dairy.

"The reality of it is, it's inconsequential," spokesman David Tarantino said, but added that a firm decision has been made to dispose of the sand. "We're not dealing with a situation here where rationality always prevails."