



Testimony of Robert Mark  
before the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board  
in the matter of Public Service Company of New Hampshire, et al,  
(Seabrook Station, Units 1 and 2), Docket Nos. 50-443 OL and 50-444 OL

RE: NECNP Contentions III.12 and III.13

July 15, 1983

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TESTIMONY OF ROBERT MARK:

Q. 1) Please state your name and address:

A. Chief Robert Mark. I reside at 70 Winnacunnet Road, Hampton, New Hampshire.

Q. 2) State your occupation and all other relevant background.

A. I am Police Chief for the Town of Hampton, New Hampshire. I have been the Police Chief since August, 1979, and have worked for the Hampton police force since 1968. Prior to that I was a sergeant in the United States Air Force assigned to the Senior Security Police at Pease Air Force Base, Newington, New Hampshire. I have received police training at the United States Air Force Police Training School, the New Hampshire State Police Academy, and the F.B.I. National Academy in Quantico, Virginia.

Q. 3) As Police Chief, what observations have you made about the summer population that would have a bearing on evacuation?

A. Hampton has an enormous influx of people during the summer months, concentrated in the beach area. We classify these people into three categories: (1) the "vacationers," those who rent cottages or stay at the hotels and motels (In recent years, especially, we have had a large number of French Canadians vacationing at Hampton); (2) the "day-trippers", those who come to the beach for the day and then leave; and (3) the "night people" -- those who come for the night life -- to the bars, clubs, restaurants, casino, or shops. On a hot weekend night, the crowd is at least ten people deep walking along the boulevard. The police force hires an additional fifty officers in the summer just to cope with the large crowds and traffic and, even then, we have at times had to call in the State Police for assistance.

Q. 4) Compared to 1978, what observations have you made with regard to the numbers of people coming to Hampton Beach?

A. There are definitely more people coming to the beach now than in 1978. The traffic is considerably heavier now than it was then. Also, there's been a good deal

of new construction over the past five years. In particular, a number of condominium complexes have been erected in the beach area.

Q. 5) What observations have you made with regard to parking in the beach area.?

A. On summer weekends, the Town's municipal lots are always packed full by 9:00 a.m., or 10:00 a.m. at the very latest. In addition to the large number of private lots, which are always full, I've observed cars parked in almost all the yards of cottages and private homes. Some people have even blacktopped their entire yards to take in cars. Cars are also parked in all available spots on the streets. On some weekend days, I've seen cars parked along both sides of the road as far back as the Tide Mill bridge, a mile from the beach.

Q. 6) Has there been any increase in parking facilities at Hampton Beach since 1978?

A. Yes, two of the Town's five municipal parking lots opened up this past year. Also, there has been an increase in the number of private lots.

Q. 7) What observations have you made with regard to the traffic in the summertime that would have a bearing on evacuation?

A. On any weekend day during the summer, except possibly when it rains, the traffic, starting at around 10:00 a.m., will be backed up on Ocean Boulevard bumper-to-bumper, all the way back to the bridge at Seabrook. On most weekend mornings the cars will be backed up from the south over the Seabrook bridge all the way into Seabrook center, a distance of three to four miles, and sometimes even into Salisbury. From the north, the traffic is backed up at least to Rte. 95, and typically backed up into Exeter. One day this summer I personally observed cars backed up as far as Brentwood, New Hampshire, 15 miles away. The traffic continues this way, bumper-to-bumper along Ocean Boulevard, all day long, reaching its peak between 3:00 and 5:00 in the afternoon when the beach people are leaving. At that time it can often take as long as two hours to drive from D street, where the Police Station is located, to the Seabrook bridge, a distance of about one mile. On busy weekend days, its not

unusual for it to take 45 minutes to go a distance of one or two blocks. Leaving the beach from the north is no better. There is always a bottleneck at Church Street where it intersects with Ocean Boulevard and narrows down to one lane. The traffic at night, although usually not quite as severe, continues to be heavy and backed up on weekends. On one particularly heavy night at around 10:00 or 11:00 p.m., it took me two hours to travel a distance of two or three blocks to answer a police call. On Thursday through Saturday nights, especially, we have considerable traffic coming into Town until 1:00 or 2:00 a.m.

Q. 8) Based on this testimony, and other observations you have made as Police Chief, what concerns do you have, if any, relative to evacuating the beach area in the event of a radiological emergency at Seabrook.?

A. Obviously, since the beach area is already saturated with traffic on a summer weekend day when only a small portion of the population is at any given time in cars, we will have a tremendous problem moving the traffic out in the event of an evacuation. If an accident occurs, the traffic could be tied up



indefinitely. Within the past two weeks, alone, we have had at least twenty car accidents at the bottleneck at Church Street and Ocean Boulevard. These accidents were, for the most part, more than just "fender-benders." They involved personal injury, as well as damage to the cars. We've also had a number of accidents at the Seabrook bridge. On this past July 4th weekend, there was a series of accidents there, one of them a 4-or 5-car pile-up. Each of these accidents tied up traffic an additional thirty minutes to two hours. During an evacuation, with everyone rushing to leave the beach area at once the likelihood of an accident is even greater. In addition, there's a real possibility that, with cars parked along both sides of the streets, and the traffic filling the streets to capacity, emergency vehicles will be unable to get through to clear up the accident and get traffic moving again.

A related area of concern is whether we will have sufficient personnel during an evacuation to handle the traffic and keep it moving. Our resources are already taxed just handling the normal weekend traffic and, in the event of a nuclear accident, I feel

certain that a number of my police officers would at least see first to their families before reporting to duty; and some would not report at all. Also, most of my special duty police officers live outside of Town and it is likely that they could not be reached or would have great difficulty getting into Town. In the event this should happen, there is a good possibility that the traffic, due to bottlenecks and accidents, will be unable to move at all.

Q. 9) Do you have any other major concerns relative to evacuating the beach area in summer?

A. Yes, I have been involved, as Deputy Chief, with two other relatively minor evacuations of the beach area. One was an evacuation during the blizzard of 1978 and the other, in 1977, was an evacuation of the beach, at around 10:00 or 11:00 p.m., in anticipation of a hurricane. In this latter evacuation, it took us approximately 3 1/2 hours to evacuate just 7,000 people from the beach area. Based on these experiences, I know that people can become very emotional during an evacuation, compounding the problem of moving them out. I also know that when



there is an emergency, people from outside the area will often try to get in because of concern over relatives who may still be there. During the 1978 evacuation, for example, we had to arrest a man for trying to break through a road barrier to "rescue" his 84-year old mother, even after we had turned him away several times and had assured him that his mother was being safely evacuated along with everyone else from the area.

Another area of concern relates to the fact that families visiting the beach here typically split up in all directions, with parents doing one thing and the children another. With the confusion of an evacuation, added to the already dense crowds and heavy traffic, it may take family members a considerable length of time to locate each other for evacuation. And some people will make trips in their cars looking for family members, aggravating the traffic problem even more.

Another concern is with flooding. At least once or twice a year certain roads, especially along the north shore of Hampton Beach, get flooded. Occassionally

these roads are impassable; usually the flooding reduces traffic to one lane. If such flooding should occur during an evacuation, it could slow down considerably the flow of traffic from the beach area. If we should have a severe flood during the summer, such as we experienced during the blizzard of 1978, evacuation would be nearly impossible. During that flood, the water reached to within an inch of the first floor window sills of the Police Station. The Army and the National Guard had to come in. I, personally, was unable to leave the beach area for two nights because the roads from the beach area were impassable.