

*Town of Duxbury, Massachusetts*  
*Office of Selectmen*



Samuel J. Chilk, Secretary  
Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20555  
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December 14, 1992

Dear Secretary Chilk:

On August 29th the NRC visited Plymouth to meet with local officials and answer questions concerning the condensate pot issue at the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station. We understand that many meetings, theories and discussions have transpired since August between the NRC, Boston Edison and the Boiling Water Operators Group on this subject. Our Board of Selectmen therefore would appreciate a follow-up to that meeting so that an update on the status of the condensate pot can be presented.

Our concern is that we not have to rely on newspaper articles or other indirect sources for information about what has transpired and what courses of action are now being taken regarding this safety matter.

It is our understanding that the condensate pot is the main instrument to measure the water level in the reactor core. According to Paul Blanche of Northeast Utilities, the design of this instrument is faulty. We understand that the instrument can give erroneously high water level readings during an accident or during any rapid depressurization and that this could lead to a meltdown. At Pilgrim we're told, there is a history of faulty readings with the condensate pot.

At the upcoming requested meeting we suggest that the same format used at the August 29th meeting be used and also request that Mr. Ashok Thadani, along with other NRC experts and individuals of responsibility be present.

This Board of Selectmen is advised by our Nuclear Affairs Committee of some questions the committee raised with the NRC after the August meeting, which in turn were answered by the NRC. Those questions, the answers and now follow-up inquiries are listed below:

- Q. "Would NRC regulations require Pilgrim Station to shut down if the reactor water level instrumentation was completely inoperable?"  
A. "Yes. . . would require a reactor shutdown if the reactor vessel water level instrumentation were inoperable."

One issue, then, is the definition of "inoperable." A Patriot Ledger article recently quoted Paul Blanche as saying: "...we should declare these instruments inoperable."

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In that same Patriot Ledger article, Ashok Thadani, Director of Systems was quoted as saying,

"It's still an important enough issue that they'll (BECO) have to make improvements. We really want instruments to be reliable."

Ivan Selin, the Chairman of the NRC, was quoted as being, "fuzzy on the issue" - so are we.

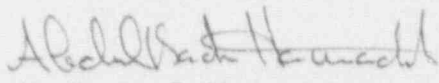
A few weeks ago, the Boiling Water Reactor Owners Group met with the NRC and heard from Boston Edison. At that meeting, Pilgrim said they had found the solution to the false readings. According to the Patriot Ledger:


"Boston Edison said it found tiny leaks in Pilgrim's water-level instrumentation that apparently allow gas to enter the gauge. They hope that fixing the leaks will put an end to false readings."

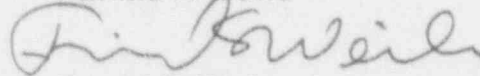
Although, the public must rely on newspaper articles, it appears there are contrary opinions - the jury is still out on the issue. Data has been presented to the NRC and it is again time for the public to meet with the NRC for a progress report.

We look forward to your prompt response and to an up-coming meeting, so we can feel assured the NRC has embarked on a path, regarding this important measuring device, that is truly protective of public health and safety.

Sincerely,

  
Abulkader C. Hamadeh  
Chairman, Board of Selectmen

  
Patricia A. Dowd

  
Friend S. Weiler

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CC: Senator Edward Kennedy  
Senator John Kerry  
Congressman Gerry Studds  
Congressman Joseph Kennedy  
Governor William Weld  
Senator Elect Brian McDonald  
Senator Elect Theresa Murray  
Selectmen, Towns of Kingston and Plymouth

TG/fbh