



THE GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS  
 State Senate  
 Committee on Ways and Means  
 ROOM 413-H, STATE HOUSE  
 BOSTON 02133  
 TELEPHONE (617) 722-1330

SENATOR EDWARD P. KIRBY  
 SECOND PLYMOUTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEES ON:  
 TRANSPORTATION  
 CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
 PUBLIC SERVICE

3/18/86

Mr. James M. Taylor  
 Office of Inspection and Enforcement  
 United States Regulatory Commission  
 Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Taylor,

As a followup to my letter of February 24, 1986, I'd like to call your attention to the enclosed Patriot Ledger editorial from March 7. The Pilgrim nuclear power plant had its best year ever in 1985, operating at 85% of capacity. At the same time, despite an overall 1985 rating of "acceptable," I am concerned over the NRC's report of "poor performance" in some areas. This resulted in your agency's sending in a team of inspectors to conduct an in-depth inspection.

How do standards of performance at the Pilgrim facility compare with those of other plants around the nation? I am understandably concerned about the safety of the residents living near the Pilgrim plant, and would appreciate hearing from you on this matter.

Sincerely,

*Edward P. Kirby*

Edward P. Kirby  
 State Senator  
 Second Plymouth District

50-293

IE28  
 1/1

8603190146 860318  
 PDR ADOCK 05000293  
 H PDR

# The Patriot Ledger

The Quincy Patriot, 1837

Quincy Daily Ledger, 1890

Consolidated Jan. 1, 1916

William B. Ketter  
Editor

Richard D. Allen  
General Manager

K. Prescott Low  
Publisher

Vol. 150 No. 51

50 Pages

Fri., March 7, 1986

Page 20

Published by the George W. Prescott Publishing Company, Executive Offices: 13 Temple St., Quincy, Mass. 02269.

Classified Advertising  
Retail-National Advertising  
Home Delivery

786-7100  
786-7180  
786-7200

News  
All Other Departments  
Toll free within Massachusetts

786-7026  
786-7000  
1-800-972-5070

## Editorials

### Shape up the Pilgrim plant

A year ago, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission said Boston Edison had improved operations at its Pilgrim nuclear power plant in Plymouth.

At the beginning of this year the company reported that the plant had its best year ever in 1985, operating at 84 percent of its potential capacity and available to generate electricity more than 91 percent of the time. That "up time" was a remarkable turnaround from the plant's disappointing performance in past years, was far above national average, and saved Boston Edison's customers about \$170 million in fuel costs.

That's the good news for 1985. The bad news is a mediocre report card from the NRC on standards of performance at the Pilgrim plant. Overall, the plant's performance during 1985 was graded as "acceptable," but the commission said Pilgrim met only minimal standards in some categories.

The NRC said it was concerned with the lack of improvement in plant operation, the program to protect workers from radiation, maintenance, surveillance and emergency preparedness. In the last three areas, Regional Administrator Thomas E. Murley wrote last month, the commission found "improvements followed by a slippage back to the lower level of performance in later years." As a result of what Murley called "poor performance" in some areas, the NRC last month sent a team of inspectors to the plant to conduct an in-depth inspection unprecedented in the New England region.

The results of that inspection won't

be released for two months. Edison officials claim that improvements had been made in the second half of last year that weren't reflected in the report.

We hope so, for the plant's grades for the year are not reassuring for the public.

Nor were the NRC's specific complaints detailed at Wednesday's public meeting in Plymouth confidence-inspiring. Commission officials cited a shortage of workers licensed to run the plant from its control room, failure to educate workers in safety procedures, lack of progress in controlling small, in-plant releases of contaminated water and steam, and having the smallest emergency preparedness staff of any plant in the region.

It is certainly not reassuring to have these deficiencies with a nuclear plant operating so close to full capacity during the year. Nor to learn that some plant operators were on the job for more than 30 hours in several two-day periods last year.

After years of past criticism of operations at Pilgrim, including a 1982 fine of \$550,000 for poor management, residents of Plymouth and neighboring communities have a right to expect something much better than an "acceptable" rating with slipping standards in some areas. The NRC should see to it that Boston Edison raises its standards of performance, and keeps them there. Instead of a marginally acceptable facility, Pilgrim should be on the honor roll for well-run nuclear plants.