



CHAIRMAN

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

PDR

August 7, 1989

Ms. Alba C. Thompson, Chairman
Town of Plymouth, Office of
the Selectmen
11 Lincoln Street
Plymouth, Massachusetts 02360

Dear Chairman Thompson:

I am responding to your two letters of June 26, 1989. Thank you for your kind remarks on my appointment as Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). As you point out, we are entering an interesting time for nuclear power in the United States. No doubt there will be difficult decisions ahead. I want to assure you that I intend to fulfill, to the best of my ability, the responsibilities entrusted to me by the President.

I am aware of the continuing concern you have regarding the status of emergency planning around the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station. When you and your fellow town leaders appeared before the Commission over seven months ago, your message was very clear. There had been significant improvement in emergency planning, but there was still work to be done. A course of action had been established and was being implemented to further improve emergency planning at all levels.

It was apparent to me that close cooperation and hard work by all involved would be needed if our mutual goal was to be achieved in a reasonable time. That goal, resolution of the remaining emergency planning issues for Pilgrim, appears to be close at hand. This reflects favorably on the dedication and effort of all those involved at the Federal, state, and local level over the past seven months. I applaud you for your personal leadership and for the continuing progress that has been made in the resolution of this sometimes very difficult issue.

The Commission's decision to allow the restart of Pilgrim was made with an understanding of the status of emergency planning. Significant progress had been made, and a plan of action had been established and was being implemented. The power ascension program at Pilgrim would take several months, and during this time, further improvement in the emergency preparedness area would continue. Your letter indicated that there are still some outstanding issues to be resolved. A full scale exercise has been tentatively scheduled for October, over two months away. I'm certain that through continued mutual cooperation and hard work these remaining issues can be resolved.

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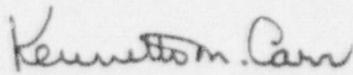
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You have also expressed concern that the NRC has asked the utility to appraise local progress in emergency planning. I think you would agree that they are a participant in this mutual effort and, in most cases, do provide substantial support for emergency planning activities. However, as you note, the utility should not be the sole source of information on local governmental progress. As Chairman Zech stated in his March 17, 1989 letter, the NRC uses a variety of sources to measure progress and to determine the adequacy of emergency planning. Utility input is not the only, or even the primary, source of information on such matters.

Please excuse my delay in responding. As you can appreciate, the first month in my new position has been particularly busy. We at the NRC look forward to a continued close working relationship with the local communities around Pilgrim, particularly in light of the upcoming emergency exercise.

Sincerely,


Kenneth M. Carr