



Cape Downwinders
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The Honorable Charles Baker
State House
Boston, Massachusetts

Congratulations on becoming our new governor. We, Cape Downwinders, Boston Downwinders, Occupy Hingham, and On Behalf of Planet Earth, wish you a successful administration and look forward to working with you and your staff on shared concerns.

We are requesting that you, as chief safety officer for the Commonwealth, make it a high priority to address the dangers exposed by the troubled Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station (PNPS) in Plymouth.

In the spring of 2013, twenty Cape and Island towns passed a public advisory question calling on the Governor to request the Nuclear Regulatory Commission uphold its mandate and revoke the operating license for Pilgrim because public safety cannot be assured. Your predecessor, Governor Patrick, agreed with us about the seriousness of Pilgrim's failures and wrote the attached letter to Allison Macfarlane, former NRC Chair.

Winter storm Juno initiated a scram with complications at PNPS on 1.27.15. Transmission wires went down followed by three separate critical systems failing and a fourth measuring instrumentation malfunction. The public was told there were no public health and safety issues. However, the NRC quickly dispatched a special inspection team, a sign of great significance. The inspectors left Plymouth five days later without any preliminary reports or response for requests for a public meeting on the scram. The report is to be made public in 45 days. Since the first shutdown, Pilgrim has experienced even more equipment failures.

Pilgrim has been in trouble for a long time. Following the 2013 degrading assessment of PNPS due to more shutdowns than any other reactor in the country and, after a year of increased oversight, it is still assessed as one of the worst reactors in the country. What is especially disconcerting is that these current failures occurred after a condemning NRC inspection report was released January 26, a day before the emergency shutdown. For the past year, Entergy neglected to follow through with Corrective Action Plans (CAP) as recommended by the NRC.

The report states:

- CAP has not been effective in ensuring adequate corrective actions are taken
- Weaknesses are identified in the safety culture
- Corrective actions identified to improve performance have not been effective
- Actions in total did not provide the assurance level required to meet the inspection objective

The damage from winter storm Juno and the subsequent scram with complications paired with the inspection report is yet another clear indication of the failing infrastructure and failure of oversight.

During the following storm on 2.15, Entergy "voluntarily" closed Pilgrim and the reactor remained down due to additional equipment failures. This extended closure confirms our fears that Entergy does not have confidence and acknowledges it cannot safely manage a scram.

Entergy continued to experience more equipment failures including:

- Main condenser tube leaks
- Electrical breaker problem
- Power supply problem

A NRC spokesperson reported that, “Entergy is taking appropriate action to work through the issues.” This statement is hardly comforting given the investigation report that clearly identifies lack of corrective actions being taken. The NRC also reported “these issues are not safety related.” Both the NRC and Entergy continue to state that safety is not an issue. However, Dr. David Lochbaum from the Union of Concerned Scientists objects to this “dismissal of issues because they involve non-safety systems and equipment.” He continues to explain:

“The March 1979 meltdown of Three Mile Island Unit 2 reactor was triggered by the failure of a non-safety related component. The April 1986 accident at Chernobyl Unit 4 was triggered by a badly conducted test of a non-safety related component. When non-safety related components caused two of the worst nuclear plant accidents in recorded history, it’s hard to dismiss non-safety related component problems so cavalierly.”

Entergy and the NRC acknowledge serious safety concerns in both the NRC report and the subsequent voluntary shutdown. We stakeholders demand the government act on our behalf to address this ongoing threat to the public. The citizens of the Commonwealth look to you, Governor Baker, for leadership to fulfill our right to safety.

In conclusion, the Commonwealth needs to step up now and provide leadership by:

- Convening an advisory committee to investigate the NRC 1.26.15 findings and the operational failures during the two winter storm with extended outages
- Acknowledging and acting on the concerns of twenty Cape and Islands towns with a renewed request to the NRC to uphold their mandate and shut the reactor down

While the MBTA problems caused inconveniences and economic problems, a radiological accident at the troubled Pilgrim reactor would have devastating consequences that would forever change the landscape of Massachusetts. The license needs to be revoked now.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns. We reiterate our willingness to work with you toward their resolution.

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Attachments:

- 6.4.12 Letter from Governor Patrick to the NRC-Don’t relicense
- 3.14.14 Letter from Governor Patrick to NRC Chair Macfarlane-close Pilgrim
- 6.19.14 Letter from NRC Chair Macfarlane-State is responsible
- 1.26.15 NRC investigative report keeping Pilgrim in a ‘degrading’ status
- 4.13 Barnstable public advisory question calling on the Governor to request the NRC close Pilgrim
- Booklet: Pilgrim Nuclear Accident=No Escape From The Cape by Cape Downwinders

