

February 27, 2006

The Honorable Therese Murray
Massachusetts Senate
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Dear Ms. Murray:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter of January 12, 2006, concerning NRC's review of the license renewal applications for the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station (NPS) of Plymouth, Massachusetts, and the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) of Vernon, Vermont. In your letter, you requested that the NRC deny Entergy Corporation's request to merge the proceedings into one review process, so that the NRC staff could fully assess the specific characteristics of each plant individually.

There appears to be some mis-communication about Entergy submitting a joint application for license renewal for the two plants. In fact, separate license renewal applications were submitted by letters dated January 25, 2006. The applications will be reviewed based on the content of the separate submittals and separate evaluations will be issued by the NRC. The NRC will fully assess the specific characteristics of each plant on an individual basis to determine if the plant can safely operate for an additional twenty years past its current license expiration date. The reviews conducted by the NRC may involve some of the same subject matter experts to ensure that the NRC actions are effective, efficient, realistic, and timely. The review process will include separate notices of the opportunity for a hearing on each application.

The NRC has established clear requirements, codified in Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* Parts 51 and 54, to assure safe plant operation for extended plant life. The NRC also follows an established license renewal application review process to guide the staff's evaluation of an applicant's compliance with license renewal requirements. This process includes opportunities for public involvement. The NRC staff conducts a thorough review of each license renewal application and prepares a safety evaluation report and environmental impact statement to document the results of each review. During these reviews, the NRC implements a license renewal inspection program to verify that applicants meet these regulations and have implemented license renewal programs and activities consistent with their applications for license renewal. In addition, the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) conducts an independent review of each safety evaluation report before making a

recommendation to the Commission. Established by Congress in 1957, the ACRS is a body of experts representing diverse technical perspectives that is independent of the staff and reports directly to the Commission. The ACRS reviews are conducted in public meetings. I hope this information addresses your concern. If you have any further questions, please contact Mr. Frank Gillespie, Director, Division of License Renewal at 301-415-1183.

Sincerely,

/RA/

J. E. Dyer, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable Therese Murray
Massachusetts Senate
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

The Honorable Thomas O'Brien
Massachusetts House of Representatives
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

The Honorable Vinny deMacedo
Massachusetts House of Representatives
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

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Sincerely,

/RA/

J. E. Dyer, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-271 and 50-293

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Identical Letters Sent To: Vinny deMacedo (State Representative, First Plymouth District)
Thomas O'Brien (State Representative, Twelfth Plymouth District)

*by e-mail

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