



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

January 25, 2012

SECRETARY

The Honorable Michael A. Costello
Massachusetts House of Representatives
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

SUBJECT: SEABROOK NUCLEAR POWER STATION

Dear Mr. Costello:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter to Chairman Gregory B. Jaczko in which you expressed concerns about the safety of extended operation of the Seabrook Nuclear Power Station. In particular, you requested that the NRC halt relicensing of Seabrook until the NRC fully and completely assesses the concrete degradation problem. You also requested that the NRC require Seabrook to repair the degraded concrete, require Seabrook to halt the infiltration of the groundwater that is believed to have caused that degradation, and ensure that the concrete degradation problem is resolved using tests and inspections over multiple years.

To the extent that your letter requests that the Commission halt the relicensing review of Seabrook, the Commission cannot respond. Under Commission regulations, the Commission has an adjudicatory role in the Seabrook license renewal proceeding. Matters related to Seabrook's license renewal application are currently pending before the Commission on appeal from the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board. Additional matters could come before the Commission in its adjudicatory capacity in the future. Therefore, it would be inappropriate for the Commission to comment on your request to halt relicensing review of Seabrook.

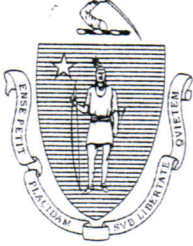
To the extent your letter raises concerns about assessment of, repair, and aging management of the concrete degradation at Seabrook, I am referring your letter to the technical staff to provide a response.

Please be assured that should information at any time show that there is a basis to question the continued safe operation of Seabrook, the NRC will take appropriate action as part of the agency's ongoing safety oversight.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Annette L. Vietti-Cook", written over a horizontal line.

Annette L. Vietti-Cook



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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The Honorable Greg Jaczko
Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Chairman Jaczko:

I am writing to express my deep concern for the public safety of the people and businesses of my district in light of disturbing new information that has come to light this year about the Seabrook nuclear power plant. As the State Representative for the First Essex District that includes the communities of Amesbury, Newburyport, and Salisbury, it is my responsibility to raise what I believe is a serious public safety issue for the people of my district and the thousands of people who visit the region annually as tourists.

According to a NRC report issued on May 23, 2011, the Seabrook plant has experienced concrete degradation due to years of groundwater infiltration. Specifically, the NRC's inspection team identified degradation characterized as "moderate to severe." The damage was found during a below-grade inspection to the accessible portion of the foundation, including electrical control tunnel B - a safety structure with vital electric cables that support the cooling system should a meltdown occur. The report indicates that because of the degradation there has been a substantial decrease in the strength and integrity of the concrete. I commend your inspection team for its vigilance in identifying this significant problem.

It is very disturbing, however, that the NRC had to concede that it does not know the scope and severity of the degradation throughout the plant's foundation. I believe the NRC recognizes the importance of the foundation's integrity. In November 2011, the NRC notified other nuclear power plants that have concrete foundations similar to the one at Seabrook to be vigilant about this issue.

While I appreciate these initial protective steps, I am concerned - as are my constituents - that the plant's operators are rushing to relicense Seabrook. Given our mutual concerns regarding the structural integrity of the foundation at Seabrook, I urge the NRC to take the following action steps:

- Halt relicensing until the Agency fully and comprehensively assesses the problem.
- Require the Seabrook operators to fix both the degraded concrete and abate the groundwater infiltration.
- Ensure that this problem is sufficiently resolved using tests and first-hand inspections over a multi-year time frame.

Finally, Seabrook Station should not be considered for relicensing based on the "aging management plan" submitted by the Seabrook operators; a paperwork promise to fix the plant is simply not adequate for a matter of this dimension.

There are 18 years left before the current operating expires, and I do not believe, given the recently identified problems at the plant, that re-licensing should proceed. The alkali-silica reaction is a new, thorny problem that your staff has thankfully identified, but will require years of intensive research, assessment, and monitoring before relicensing should be even considered.

The safety of the people, businesses, and tourists of Massachusetts' First Essex District is of paramount importance and they deserve complete assurance that there will be no need for Seabrook's emergency sirens to sound the warning to evacuate their communities.

Thank you for your continued vigilance in protecting public safety. I look forward to your detailed response and to working with you on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MA Costello', with a stylized, cursive script.

Michael A. Costello
State Representative

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the Matter of)	
)	
NEXTERA ENERGY SEABROOK, LLC)	DOCKET NO. 50-443-LR
(Seabrook Station, Unit 1))	
)	
(License Renewal))	

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing **Letter from the Secretary to the Honorable Michael A. Costello**, dated January 25, 2012, have been served upon the following persons by Electronic Information Exchange.

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NEXTERA ENERGY SEABROOK, LLC (Seabrook Station Unit 1) – Docket No. 50-443-LR
Letter from the Secretary to the Honorable Michael A. Costello

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[Original signed by Nancy Greathead]
Office of the Secretary of the Commission

Dated at Rockville, Maryland
this 25th day of January 2012