

From: PAUL M. BLANCH <PMBLANCH@ix.netcom.com>
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Date: 8/10/96 4:14pm
Subject: BOSTON GLOBE

Safety team to rule on Millstone reopening

Associated Press, 08/07/96

WATERFORD, Conn. - The Millstone nuclear power plant will not be allowed to resume operating until an independent team verifies that safety problems

have been fixed, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission announced yesterday.

For the first time since Shirley Ann Jackson became commission chairwoman a year ago, she addressed the public to offer reassurances that the NRC will not

let Northeast Utilities, the owner of the three-reactor plant, slide on safety issues.

"Our customer is the public," she said. "Not one of these plants should be allowed to go back on line until they can operate safely."

About 200 people attended the meeting in an auditorium of Waterford High School. Outside, a group of about 20 sign-carrying protesters chanted "NRC,

keep it closed!"

All three Millstone units are on the NRC's watch list of troubled plants and cannot come back on line until the full Nuclear Regulatory Commission votes to

give the utility the go-ahead.

The independent verification team will be appointed within the coming month and consist of people proposed by the NRC and Northeast Utilities, Jackson

said. She did not say how many people would be on the team. A committee from the state Legislature will oversee the team's work.

The team's job will be to confirm that certain areas of the plants have been fixed. As is typical, the NRC also will have an operational safety team and resident

inspectors look into the plant's deficiencies.

Although such teams have been used for new plants just starting up, NRC officials said they had not been used before for facilities already in operation.

During a press conference before the public meeting, Jackson said she does not believe the work of the inspection team will affect the restart date of the

reactors. That date remains in question as the utility continues to investigate and document its own problems.

Jackson described the problems as "pervasive" and said no other plants in the country appear to have such extensive problems. However, she said many

plants that have been on the "watch list" have bounced back. "I think this is a fixable problem. This is an issue of management," Jackson said.

But she said it is not the NRC's job to "reach into a company and decide who should be in which positions."

She also indicated that the commission will hold its own people accountable in the process and will take "appropriate actions" after she gathers more information.

Critics say the agency has turned its head and allowed problems to persist, and Jackson acknowledged that the NRC has not always done its job.

"Why did the regulatory culture not act as it should have? Frankly, I don't have all the answers yet," she said.

Meanwhile, the state faced soaring temperatures for a second day with its fourth nuclear plant, Connecticut Yankee - also owned by Northeast - also closed over safety concerns.

Some scattered power generators and energy imported from other states have been keeping Connecticut's air conditioners running.

This story ran on page B4 of the Boston Globe on 08/07/96.

From: PAUL M. BLANCH <PMBLANCH@ix.netcom.com>
To: BARB NEWSOME <BARBNEWSOM@aol.com>
Date: 8/8/96 4:50am
Subject: HARTFORD COURANT

NU whistleblowers say don't restart plants yet

By SUSAN E. KINSMAN

This story ran in the Courant August 8, 1996

WATERFORD - Despite Northeast Utilities' latest efforts to resolve employee concerns, many workers at the Millstone nuclear power plants are still

reluctant to raise safety concerns for fear of retaliation by management.

A preliminary report by an independent review team from the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission concluded Wednesday that a supportive climate had not existed at Millstone in the past 10 years, and based on NU's own internal survey, many workers don't believe such a climate exists today.

NU officials and staff of the NRC agreed Wednesday that NU has yet to turn the corner on that long-standing weakness, one of the biggest issues NU has to correct before it will be allowed to restart any of the Waterford plants.

The findings are not new. They have been well documented in numerous NRC reports and enforcement actions over the years and in NU's most recent self-assessment.

"It sounds pretty familiar compared to our own self-assessment late last year," said Ted Feigenbaum, NU's chief nuclear officer.

"Clearly I'm not trying to defend what clearly is still a problem for us. We've made some progress in the last six months. But there is a lot more to do."

He said the company no longer discriminates against employees who raise questions.

Several whistleblowers and former NU employees told the NRC Wednesday that it was premature to talk about restarting the Millstone plants. They said that all pending government investigations into discrimination against workers who raised safety or other allegations should be concluded first.

The whistleblowers also blamed the NRC for failing to act quickly on the issues they raised and for failing to protect them from management backlash.

The report agreed with the whistleblowers' complaints against the NRC.

The NRC is investigating the methods NU used to choose the 104 nuclear plant workers who were laid off in January. Workers claimed they were targeted for layoffs because they had brought problems to the attention of management or the NRC.

Creating a climate that encourages employees to come forward is critical to the safe operation of a nuclear power plant, because federal regulators rely

on workers to spot safety issues that may escape their inspections, officials have said.

The NRC's findings were based on an evaluation of NU's handling of safety and other issues raised by Millstone workers over the past 10 years.

The final report is expected to be issued Aug. 16, incorporating the concerns and comments of a dozen members of the public, many of whom were former NU employees and whistleblowers.

The team selected nine case files "representative of the spectrum of cases," said John N. Hannon, team leader.

Among them was Paul Blanch of West Hartford, a former NU engineer who questioned the accuracy of sensitive measuring devices inside nuclear reactors.

A finding that Blanch had been harassed and discriminated against by senior NU management prompted the NRC to take escalated enforcement action against NU, fining it \$100,000 in 1993.

Blanch said the program created to investigate employee safety issues "is essentially being used to target people. There have been instances where names have been turned over to management. A hostile environment still exists today. Nothing has changed," he said.

Blanch and other current and former employees interviewed said NU did not respond quickly enough to safety concerns.

They said employees who raised questions were subject to harassment and discrimination by management and that a hostile environment existed at the

plant for those who brought problems to management. Those who complained were not considered "team players."

The workers said NU's management and the NRC were to blame.

Don Miller, NU's vice president for oversight, said a recent survey of 2,200 workers showed 25 percent were not comfortable bringing safety issues to management and 40 percent believed the company's treatment of those who did created a chilling effect on others considering coming forward.

"This has been an ongoing problem at NU for a number of years. You looked at this for 10 years. It's probably been going on much longer," Miller said.

He acknowledged that change is coming slowly because the company is working to solve the problem. "What we don't want is another 'Plan of the Month' " that doesn't work, he said.

Galatis' complaints about procedures for handling spent fuel rods at Millstone 1, which made the cover of Time magazine, is credited with forcing regulators to look deeper into NU's operational problems. But his case was not part of the review team's study, he said.

Galatis said the NRC should revoke NU's license to operate the Millstone plants because of its repeated violations of federal law prohibiting retaliation

against nuclear whistleblowers. "They shouldn't even be talking about restart," he said.

Ironically, the NRC report comes only a week after The Courant publicized similar problems about the NRC's handling of concerns by its own employees and another report by the NRC's Office of Inspector General that criticized the agency for not responding quickly enough and failing to resolve safety issues raised by Galatis.

From: PAUL M. BLANCH <PMBLANCH@ix.netcom.com>
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Date: 8/7/96 5:10pm
Subject: [Fwd: The Bum's Rush]

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Received: from dub-img-6.compuserve.com (dub-img-6.compuserve.com [149.174.206.136]) by ixmaill1.ix.netcom.com (8.7.5/SMI-4.1/Netcom) id FAA10081; Wed, 7 Aug 1996 05:23:05 -0700 (PDT)

Received: by dub-img-6.compuserve.com (8.6.10/5.950515) id HAA12300; Wed, 7 Aug 1996 07:47:25 -0400

Date: 07 Aug 96 07:47:10 EDT

From: Glenn Cheney <71762.355@CompuServe.COM>

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Subject: The Bum's Rush

Message-ID: <960807114710_71762.355_EHL35-1@CompuServe.COM>

Status: U

X-Mozilla-Status: 0001

To: Maura Casey

I am very, very pissed off about getting hauled out of the press conference. The implications are very serious. Can the police really just grab any citizen, who is doing nothing wrong, and force him or her to do as they say? Can a citizen, uncharged with any crime or misdemeanor, really be penalized for passively resisting police efforts to curtail a constitutional right? I mean, if you were sitting on a park bench and a cop came along and told you to jump in the lake, would you do it? And if they said, OK., we'll throw you in the lake, would you raise your voice in protest? Apparently you'd be committing an infraction if you raised your voice. You'd be creating a public disturbance. It would cost you \$88 in Waterford. I don't know about Scotland. Is Scotland still free?

It's hard to believe that NU can do all it's done and be charged with nothing, yet if a journalist is caught quietly sitting on a chair at a press conference, he can be forcibly evicted and penalized for shouting about his constitutional rights. Something's wrong here. I find it pretty scary.

I appeared on at least two TV news programs (three times each), but all they did was show me getting hauled away. They didn't mention it was a journalist being hauled out of a press conference. People will probably assume it was a wack-o anti-nuke freak who had been trying to break up the meeting.

Boy am I mad. What a case I'm going to make of this. Do you know anybody in the CLU? If they want \$88 out of me, they're going to have to pry it from my cold, dead fingers.

Glenn

From: PAUL M. BLANCH <PMBLANCH@ix.netcom.com>
To: BARB NEWSOME <BARBNEWSOM@aol.com>
Date: 8/6/96 9:26am
Subject: NO MORE AOL

Dear Pen Pals:

I have terminated my AOL service. Please use the above address instead. In case it doesn't appear on your copy it is PMBLANCH@IX.NETCOM.COM