

Barry Nickelsberg

Pegasus Farm

December 24, 1996

Ms. Shirley Jackson
Chairwoman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Chairwoman Jackson:

I am writing to you to express my overwhelming concerns about the safety of The Maine Yankee Nuclear Power Plant in Wiscasset, Maine.

This Plant has been plagued by a variety of safety incidents, any one of which could have been cause for unspeakable disaster. From the rigged computer program for the cooling backup system to the cracked steam tubes last year, we were led to believe that these were isolated incidents which never compromised Plant safety and were being addressed immediately by the administration at Maine Yankee.

Your own "top-to-bottom" review of Maine Yankee just two months ago only looked at four of the Plant's forty systems and in that, identified 3,200 deficiencies. These facts are hardly reassuring to those of us who live near the plant. After the NRC Task Force completed its review, it was discovered that a control room wire had been cut sometime in the early 1990's and only discovered in late 1996. Now, crossed wires have been identified which would have compromised redundant systems and not one, but five relief valves in the heat exchange systems of the spent fuel pool and component cooling water (which were part of the original design) were never installed.

The wires have been crossed since the Plant opened and the relief valves were never in place. Why are these only being discovered now? Why weren't they inspected, identified, and corrected before the Plant ever went on-line? Why has it taken 24 years to find them? The reality is that your "top-to-bottom" review of Maine Yankee not only missed the cut wire, the crossed wires, and the missing relief valves but also missed the fact that a chair used by guards was contaminated, possibly since January. What else is crossed, missing, rigged, or contaminated? What else did the NRC Task Force miss?

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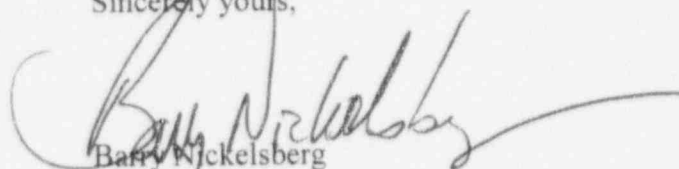
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We have been assured time and time again that the Plant is safe. Yet, with each passing week there is a new revelation of safety issues that have been missed for years, or in some cases, for decades.

We, the public, have been misled. The NRC must step in to assure the safety of the citizens of Maine. This issue can not be handled locally or even at the state level. Without the diligence of the NRC, we will all lose. I urge you to address this issue immediately and not to allow Maine Yankee to come back on-line until every possible safety concern and inspection, dating back to the Plant's very inception, has been satisfactorily completed and all deficiencies have been corrected.

I look forward to your involvement and thank you in advance for your diligence.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Barry Nickelsberg", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Barry Nickelsberg
Emergency Management Agency Director,
Alna, Maine

cc: The Honorable Olympia Snowe
The Honorable Susan Collins
The Honorable Tom Allen
The Honorable John Baldacci

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