



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

SENATOR STEVEN A. BADDOUR

FIRST ESSEX DISTRICT
ROOM 208, STATE HOUSE
TEL. (617) 722-1604
FAX. (617) 722-1999
Steven.Baddour@state.ma.us

CHAIRMAN:
TRANSPORTATION

VICE-CHAIRMAN:
THE JUDICIARY

MEMBER:
WAYS & MEANS
POST AUDIT & OVERSIGHT
GLOBAL WARMING
CONSUMER PROTECTION
FEDERAL STIMULUS OVERSIGHT

December 14, 2011

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 Senator from Massachusetts' First Essex District that includes the communities of Amesbury, Haverhill, Merrimac, Methuen, Newburyport, North Andover (Precincts 1, 4, 6 and 8) 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 many people who visit the region as tourists.

According to a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (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 concrete 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. As the people of my communities know, a building is no stronger than its foundation. I believe the NRC agrees because in November 2011, you notified other nuclear power plants that have these same emerging concerns relative to the type of concrete used at the Seabrook plant and about which they should be vigilant.

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 your Agency 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 paperwork “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 that 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 that reads "Steven A. Baddour". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "S".

Steven A. Baddour
State Senator
First Essex District