

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 13, 2012

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

Dear Chairman Jaczko:

We write to request that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) immediately plan and convene a public meeting at a location near the Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant to discuss the alarming degradation of concrete found in a safety-related tunnel due to its exposure to water. We believe that the NRC's current plan to conduct its sole meeting on this topic at its headquarters in Maryland on April 23 severely limits the ability of those who live and work near the facility to fully understand the nature of this safety- and aging-related problem. We additionally request that such a meeting be conducted using a traditional public format that allows attendees to hear all presentation materials, questions and answers, as opposed to the "open house" style meeting that NRC recently has started to utilize that seems to enable only small group or one-on-one question and answer sessions. It also would be our expectation that appropriate NRC technical subject matter experts be present and available at this meeting to answer questions the public may have. Finally, we encourage you to consider locations in both Massachusetts and New Hampshire for such a meeting.

We wrote you on June 8, 2011¹ urging the Commission to announce its intent to deny NextEra Energy Seabrook, the licensee for the Seabrook nuclear power plant, its June 1, 2010 request² for a twenty-year operating license that would begin in 2030 and end in 2050. We made this request in part on the grounds that there are likely to be additional aging and other safety issues that could not possibly be contemplated or fully understood twenty years in advance of the nuclear reactor's end-of-licensed life. One such issue is clearly the degradation in safety-related concrete structures that led NRC to send a letter³ to NextEra requesting it to attend a meeting to discuss the issue at NRC headquarters on April 23, 2012. If safety structures that are supposed to help cool the Seabrook nuclear power plant are experiencing such alarming degradation during the reactor's 'adolescence', there is simply no way that the NRC can guarantee that it will remain safe when it enters its 'golden years' almost 40 years from now.

¹ <http://markey.house.gov/document/2011/letter-nrc-regarding-seabrook-0>

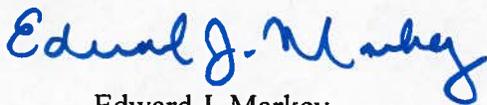
² <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/renewal/applications/seabrook.html>

³ ADAMS accession number ML 120480066

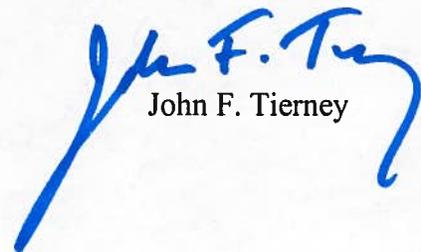
The concerns related to Seabrook's concrete structure were also raised by the International Atomic Energy Agency when it recently released a report⁴ detailing an inspection conducted at the Seabrook plant. The inspection team found that the concrete degradation could have been identified earlier had the licensee taken steps to look for it, and that the licensee knew that water was present in proximity to the concrete structures.

We continue to believe that it is grossly premature, as a matter of general policy and in this specific case, to proceed with the license extension process for a nuclear reactor whose current license remains valid until 2030. The concrete degradation found at Seabrook amplifies these views. But it also raises more immediate questions about whether the reactor at Seabrook can be expected to safely operate during the next eighteen years of its existing license. We are pleased that the Commission is continuing to explore this matter, and we urge you to continue and expand upon these efforts. However, we also believe that any failure to conduct a second public meeting on the topic at a location near the Seabrook facility would further undermine the public trust in the Commission's ability and willingness to assure the safety of the reactor. We urge you to quickly schedule such a meeting, and look forward to your prompt response to this request.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey



John F. Tierney

⁴ <http://pbadupws.nrc.gov/docs/ML1208/ML12081A105.pdf>