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MA State House
Boston, MA

The Honorable Charles Baker,

This past week, a bold action on the part of Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has raised the alarm at Entergy's troubled Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station in Plymouth. Seven NRC engineers documented a serious design flaw in nuclear reactors in the United States. Entergy's troubled Pilgrim reactor is on that danger list. The electrical problems identified by the staff in 2012 could result in damage to the cooling safety systems and cause a core meltdown. Their professional recommendation was to immediately fix the design flaw or shut down the impacted nuclear reactors. But the NRC failed to implement the recommendations, essentially blocking mitigation of a serious safety flaw. So the staff filed an NRC public citizen 2.206 petition for redress of their concerns. Operating under these conditions is a violation of the terms of Entergy's operating license.¹ According to NRC regulations, this is a major issue.²

NRC ignoring expert staff recommendations is not a new pattern of the agency. In 2013, Senator Ed Markey called out the NRC Commissioners for not voting for filters on GE Mark 1 boiling water reactors vents in response to the catastrophe at Fukushima. He went on to declare, "The NRC has abdicated its responsibility to ensure public health and safety in New England and across the country. Instead of following its top experts' safety recommendations, it chose to grant the nuclear power industry's requests for more studies and more delays, and even after the study is completed there is still no guarantee that the NRC will ever make this commonsense requirement mandatory."³

We know Entergy is already in serious trouble. The NRC has declared Pilgrim, a Fukushima twin plant, the most degraded plant in the USA. The list of unresolved issues at Pilgrim are a compendium of failure, violation, and danger to our health and safety for our children and communities. The list of failed inspections reads like a nuclear rap sheet on the NRC website. The NRC has even published a special page on their website with documentation of Entergy's failures.⁴

Your peer, Governor Cuomo, understands the dangers to his constituents in NY, calling for the closure of Entergy's Indian Point, 35 miles north of NYC. Boston is in the same danger zone. We

¹ <http://allthingsnuclear.org/dlochbaum/the-nrc-seven-petitioning>

² <https://spoonsenergymatters.wordpress.com/2016/03/04/dangerous-flaw-threatens-to-close-nations-nuclear-fleet>

³ <http://www.markey.senate.gov/news/press-releases/markey-nrcs-delay-of-fukushima-safety-measure-is-irresponsible>

⁴ <http://www.nrc.gov/info-finder/reactors/pilg/special-oversight.html>

have been calling your attention to the fact that the industry trumps public safety since you took office, however, there has been no response.

In your previous comments, you noted that you have allowed the NRC and the ISO-NE grid managers to take the lead and determine for you the remaining 'shelf life' of the troubled Pilgrim reactor. You have also deferred to the experts at the NRC. However, this latest damaging development spotlights the fact that the NRC doesn't even listen to their own engineering experts. They have now spoken and petitioned for immediate closure of all affected reactors unless this deficiency, identified in 2012, is resolved. Why is this risk acceptable? How risky does it have to get before its not worth the gamble?

The incompetent and incredulous is becoming the ordinary when it comes to NRC regulation of the nuclear industry. We now see courageous NRC staff whistleblowers risking their jobs to bring public attention to the corruption of the Nuclear Regulatory Agency by filing a public petition on an ignored and vital safety concern that impacts Pilgrim, calling for immediate mitigation or shutdown while proving the NRC is incapable of regulating the industry.

The NRC continues to negligently prop up the failed operations of Entergy with ineffectual regulation, clearly a betrayal of the public trust.

As Pilgrim currently operates with a repetitive degrading status and is one step from federally mandated shutdown, this latest identification by NRC staff of a fatal design flaw not mitigated must be seriously addressed. Governor Baker, you, as Chief Safety Officer, have an obligation to the citizens of the Commonwealth to call for the immediate closure of Pilgrim.

Will you now take a stand on our behalf?

We look forward to your response.

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