



**UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**  
REGION I  
2100 RENAISSANCE BLVD.  
KING OF PRUSSIA, PA 19406-2713

December 13, 2016

The Honorable Kenneth Tavares  
Chairman, Board of Selectmen  
11 Lincoln Street  
Plymouth, MA 02360

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff regrets not being able to support your request for our attendance at the latest Plymouth Board of Selectmen meeting. As you are aware, we have just completed the second week of a three-week inspection, called a 95003 Phase "C" inspection, which focuses on the performance of the plant personnel and equipment at Pilgrim, and the underlying causes for the degraded performance that resulted in the plant's move to Column 4 of the NRC's Action Matrix. I am declining your offer to speak in person because the inspection is ongoing, and it is critical to focus on the results of the two weeks on site in support of the preparation for the final inspection week in January. Additionally, specific information on the progress of our review is considered "pre-decisional" and would be inappropriate to be publicly discussed at this time in the process.

As you know, a member of the NRC staff inadvertently forwarded an email to a member of the public that contained preliminary observations from the team inspection. I understand this inadvertent release of less-than-fully developed information has caused considerable consternation in the community. I truly apologize for any distress this may have caused. Let me assure you that Pilgrim is operating safely. Our inspectors continuously evaluate plant safety as issues are identified and Pilgrim remains safe. However, should any information surface which causes the Agency to lose confidence in Entergy's ability to safely operate the plant, we would not hesitate to take appropriate regulatory action, up to and including ordering the plant shutdown.

To foster a better understanding of the information contained in the email, let me describe how an inspection team works. For this inspection, the team members gather at the site each morning and disperse into the plant. They observe operations and maintenance activities, interview workers and review documents to identify possible weaknesses. At the end of the day, the team gathers to share what they inspected and what they have seen during the day. As they interact, they adjust their inspection plans and line of inquiry for the following day to more fully clarify the picture they are developing. The team leader then briefs NRC management on the team's progress. It is important to note that the information in the email update was a running list of raw observations and data points, and does not represent a fully developed perspective on Entergy's performance. Additionally, many statements in the email reflect specific inspector observations regarding open questions requiring further elaboration during the remainder of the inspection. They are not intended to be generalizations of overall performance or plant conditions.

We are still in the early stages of our Phase “C” inspection at Pilgrim. Until the inspection has been completed and the results fully assessed, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to predict to what extent these observations factor into our final determinations on Entergy’s progress in improving the plant’s performance. The type of information included in this email is not unusual for the early stages of an inspection and clearly demonstrates that this inspection team is rigorously examining Entergy’s performance. It is, however, understandable that someone not familiar with the process and specifics of the inspection could easily read this email and take the information out of context and inappropriately extrapolate it.

After the team leaves the site in January, they will return to the office to finalize and document their findings. Once that is done, we will hold a meeting in Plymouth to discuss the final results of the inspection with our various stakeholders, including the public. We recognize that the deliberate nature of the process requires a period of time. In the interim, I will be closely following the inspection and will keep you apprised if our assessment of Entergy’s ability to safely operate Pilgrim changes.

Sincerely,

/RA/ Original Signed by:

Daniel H. Dorman  
Regional Administrator

cc:

Melissa Arrighi, Town Manager  
John Kotek, Acting Assistant Secretary of Nuclear Energy  
State of Massachusetts

REQUEST FOR NRC ATTENDANCE AT THE LATEST PLYMOUTH BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING.

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DOCUMENT NAME: G:\ORA\RSLO\Pilgrim Letter 12-2016 Rev 1.docx  
**Non-Public Designation Category: MD 3.4 Non-Public \_\_\_\_\_ (A.3 - A.7 or B.1)**  
 ADAMS PACKAGE ACCESSION NUMBER: [ML16348A272](#)

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OFFICE	RI/SLO	RI/RA			
NAME	MDraxton	DDorman			
DATE	12/13/16	12/13/16			