

PRESS RELEASE

Groups Say Entergy's Pilgrim Nuclear Should Close During Upcoming Historic Winter Storm

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The Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station on Cape Cod Bay is directly in the path of the historic winter storm due to hit Plymouth, Mass. starting Friday. According to information from the National Weather Service, there could be widespread prolonged power outages, coastal flooding and erosion, and hurricane force winds.

Local groups have asked the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to order Entergy Corporation, Pilgrim's operator, to take the reactor offline during the storm to prevent an unacceptable risk to the public and the environment. This storm differs from Hurricane Sandy because it is hitting Plymouth during high tide, not low tide, and will be accompanied by heavy snow and ice.

The groups say that a prolonged power outage, flooding, high winds, and snow and ice could cause several serious problems at Pilgrim. First, the pumps that circulate water through the pool of high-level nuclear waste could fail. If this happens, the water in the spent fuel pool would eventually evaporate, exposing the spent fuel to air. Second, Pilgrim's cooling water intake pumps, which take in over 500 million gallons of water per day from Cape Cod Bay to cool the reactor, could flood or fail. Under either scenario, there could be an explosion that would release radioactive material throughout the region.

"This is predicted to be a historic storm with severe consequences," said Pine DuBois, Executive Director of Jones River Watershed Association. "Winds are supposed to pick up Friday night during high tide and continue through the even higher tide Saturday morning. Near hurricane gusts will be out of the east, hitting Pilgrim head-on. At other times during high winds, Pilgrim's water intake pumps have failed."

"Entergy could not keep the lights on during the Super Bowl -- can we be sure they'll provide enough power to Pilgrim during the storm?" duBois added.

According to Karen Vale, Campaign Manager at Cape Cod Bay Watch, "This historic storm emphasizes that rising sea levels and frequent, more severe storms make Pilgrim's continued operations increasing risky. We hope that the NRC will close Pilgrim until the threat of the storm passes."

More information: www.capecodbaywatch.org; www.pilgrimcoalition.org

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