

&gt;

By Lauren DiTullio

[Print Page](#)

February 20, 2014 7:32PM

## Critics say Pilgrim needs to do more to protect whales

Entergy Corp., owner of the Pilgrim nuclear power plant, agreed in December to establish guidelines for endangered-whale sightings near the power plant. However, some say endangered species will not be adequately protected unless the plant's operating license is amended.

Entergy Corp., owner of the Pilgrim nuclear power plant, agreed in December to establish guidelines for what to do when endangered whales are seen near the power plant.

The policy has become a regulatory commitment between Entergy and the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission, but some say endangered species will not be adequately protected unless the plant's operating license is amended.

Karen Vale, a whale expert with Plymouth-based Cape Cod Watch, said the plant needs to do more.

"I hope the NRC will require the amendment we asked for," she said. "It's not just whales, which is what their protocol covers. There are other endangered species such as sturgeon and turtles to worry about."

The guidelines require contacting an expert when a whale is sighted to determine whether it is a member of an endangered or threatened species.

If it is, Pilgrim would be required to contact the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Pilgrim is not required to do that as a condition of its license, but Nuclear Regulatory Commission spokesman Neil Sheehan said the rule can still be enforced.

Pilgrim critic and Cape Cod Watch member Meg Sheehan, who is not related to Neil Sheehan and has written letters to Entergy and the nuclear agency demanding more substantial changes, said she does not agree.

"Entergy avoids any penalties with a voluntary protocol," she said. "Would the average citizen be able to avoid criminal penalties by getting law enforcement to say that compliance with the (Endangered Species Act) is voluntary?"

<http://plymouth.wickedlocal.com/article/20140220/NEWS/140229325>

[Print Page](#)