

NUKE MATTERS: America's Hometown goes nuclear

History of Nuclear Power in the U.S.

By **Karen Vale, Cape Cod Bay Watch**

Wicked Local Plymouth

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Power stations have an operational lifespan of 40 years – after which time radioactivity degrades parts, leading to leaks and compromising safety. Despite this, the regulatory body that oversees nuclear facility safety in the U.S., the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), has extended licenses to facilities allowing them to operate decades past their intended lifespans – including Pilgrim. Despite outstanding concerns, the NRC recently relicensed Pilgrim for another 20 years. These concerns include:

- Pilgrim's reactor has the same design flaw as Fukushima – a relief vent installed as a quick "fix" for a containment structure that cannot withstand pressure buildup; the vent was tested three times in Fukushima and failed, resulting in explosions.
- There have been incidents of radiation-linked disease in surrounding communities.
- Pilgrim uses more than 500,000 gallons of Cape Cod Bay's water each day to cool its reactor - harming marine life and degrading biologically important habitats.
- Pilgrim's permit to operate its "once-through" cooling system expired 16 years ago.
- Radioactive tritium is polluting groundwater, which flows into Cape Cod Bay.

Working toward a Solution

If Pilgrim is to operate for another 20 years, concerned residents must insist that government regulators take notice of the issue, request assessments of the effects Pilgrim has on species and habitats in the bay, and demand Pilgrim obtain valid permits and certifications required under the law. It's up to individuals to hold regulators accountable for failing to implement various laws and regulations.

To learn more about how you can help, please visit capecodbaywatch.org.

Karen Vale is the campaign coordinator at Cape Cod Bay Watch. Cape Cod Bay Watch is dedicated to protecting and restoring water quality and marine life in Cape Cod Bay through public education, networking, and advocacy. Its current priority is addressing the harmful effects of the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station – especially its destructive "once-through cooling" system – on

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water quality and marine life in the bay.

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