

## OF NUCLEAR INTEREST: A violation of public trust

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### Stories From Chatter Network

By Diane Turco

For almost two years, Cape Downwinders has delivered multiple letters to Governor Baker, petitioning him to take action and communicate to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) that the ongoing operation of the Pilgrim nuclear power station is an unacceptable threat to over 5 million people who live within the 50-mile emergency planning zone. We do not accept the serious hazard posed by the repetitively degrading nuclear reactor that is one step from federally mandated shutdown for a second year in a row.

As Governor of the Commonwealth, Charlie Baker must understand that his responsibility for public health and safety is paramount. We citizens have a basic and fundamental right to safety. When challenged by federal government support of private industry, the Governor's strong position to protect the public is of vital importance. As such, he should speak up for us because public safety is at risk, a fact ignored at the federal level in their push for support of nuclear power at any cost.

Today, with the ongoing NRC special inspections uncovering more and more violations, Pilgrim remains an immediate threat to our communities. In the event of a serious accident, we know the emergency plans will not protect the public. In fact, for Cape Codders and all residents outside of the 10-mile evacuation zone and within the 50-mile emergency planning zone, the state plan is not evacuation but relocation after families and communities have been

exposed to dangerous radioactive fallout. With nowhere to go, it is unconscionable that the state supports a plan that places citizens as acceptable collateral damage to the profits of Entergy Corporation.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has a public safety policy that finds "each and every human life is of equal and inestimable value." To enforce this mandate, action should be taken by the Governor. Otherwise, to exclude an entire part of the population from safety and put them in harm's way is a violation of the public trust.

So who is accountable? The NRC has documented the dangers and releases in multiple paper reports. Entergy is told to try again. And Entergy operates on the bottom line. As our chief safety officer, Governor Baker has a moral obligation to protect the public. Shortly after the NRC placed Pilgrim in the lowest rated safety column, Governor Baker sent a letter to John Dent, Vice President at Pilgrim. He called for 'swift action' if more violations were found. Since then, many more violations have been identified including lack of maintenance, emergency shutdowns, falsified records, and ongoing degradation, again. How many inspections does it take to shut down a dangerous nuclear reactor?

During this inspection, the NRC does allow the state to assign an 'expert' to join their team. But Governor Baker neglected to take advantage of this important shared oversight role. Instead, John Giarrusso, Chief of Nuclear Preparedness, will attend. His background is in emergency planning, not in nuclear engineering. Rather than take this opportunity on behalf of his constituents, Governor Baker puts his trust in the NRC against evidence that the health and safety of citizens is the priority.

In order to have positive and effective change, we need strong leadership now. Cape Downwinders and groups across the state will continue to go to the State House and demand action. Visit

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..... for more information.

Diane Turco is the Executive Director of Cape Downwinders and a resident of Harwich. Cape Downwinders works collaboratively with Cape Cod Bay Watch.

