
OF NUCLEAR INTEREST: State panel to convene again in Plymouth

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The State's Nuclear Decommissioning Citizens Advisory Panel (NDCAP) plans to meet for the second time on June 21 at the Plymouth Public Library. NDCAP was established by legislation in 2016 to address concerns about the decommissioning of Entergy's Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station, due to permanently shut down by June 2019. The panel's primary charge is to make a yearly report to the governor.

While NDCAP has no regulatory authority over Pilgrim's decommissioning activities, it could be an important way for the state to be proactive in Pilgrim's shutdown process. The panel is tasked with advising the governor, state Legislature, state agencies, and members of the public on issues related to the facility's decommissioning activities and storage plans for its high-level nuclear waste.

From NDCAP's first meeting in May it was obvious that the diversity of expertise represented on the panel will be an asset when addressing decommissioning issues. The fields of health, environment, energy, emergency management, economics, tourism, utilities, and more are covered by elected officials, town appointees, state agencies, nonprofits, plant and union representatives, and others.

Also obvious from the first meeting was that the public has a keen interest in what the panel has to say and do. Members of the public from Plymouth, Duxbury, Cape Cod, Boston, Hingham, and beyond attended. One by one, they took to the mic to express an appreciation for the panel's existence, but also aired

significant concerns about Pilgrim. Many of those concerns were related to Pilgrim's poor operating record, the apparent deficit in the decommissioning fund, and the siting of Pilgrim's nuclear waste on the shore within reach of rising seas and coastal storms.

According to the meeting notice published on June 2, the required minimum of five NDCAP members called the June 21st meeting. The group plans to organize, nominate a permanent chair and co-chair, and determine initial subcommittees. However, 11 panel members will be needed to carry out this agenda and for votes to take place.

The public will have two chances to comment at the next meeting. First, the panel is seeking input on the subcommittee ideas, which will include topics such as Pilgrim's operations before shutdown, spent fuel issues, emergency preparedness, safety, community involvement, economics, and government relations. Second, the public will have a chance to weigh-in on topics that should be covered at future meetings.

The meeting is scheduled for June 21 at the Plymouth Public Library on South Street, and will run from 6 to 8 p.m. More information and a full agenda can be found at www.capecodbaywatch.org.

Karen Vale-Vasilev manages Jones River Watershed Association's Cape Cod Bay Watch program. JRWA has its offices on the banks of the Jones River in Kingston, eight miles from Pilgrim.