



UNITED STATES  
**NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**  
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Newsday Letters Editor:

Your Nov. 30 editorial regarding the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's approval of a 20-year license extension for the Millstone nuclear power plant ("Too quick for comfort") could leave readers with the wrong impression that the application was reviewed in rapid-fire fashion.

To the contrary, the NRC received the application for the Waterford, Conn., facility on Jan. 22, 2004 and did not complete its thorough review of the proposal until Nov. 28, 2005 -- 22 months later.

In between, the agency conducted a half-dozen public meetings in the vicinity of the plant related to the application; solicited and obtained comments from dozens of government officials and interested groups and individual citizens; and devoted more than 20,000 hours to reviewing key safety and environmental issues that could come into play during an extended period of plant operation.

With regard to the contentions filed by Suffolk County, it's worth noting the window for filing a request for a hearing on the Millstone application was open from March 12, 2004 until May 11, 2004. However, the county submitted its initial request on Dec. 17, 2004 - more than seven months past the deadline.

That petition was denied by the NRC because the county failed to address the agency's late-filing standards.

Suffolk County filed a second request on Feb. 1, 2005, in which it sought a hearing based on three contentions related to emergency planning. After the petition was considered by a quasi-judicial board that is part of the NRC, the five-member Commission that oversees the NRC rejected the request on Oct. 26.

Among the reasons cited by the Commission was that emergency planning concerns are not within the scope of the license renewal review process but should instead be dealt with on an ongoing basis.

"Emergency planning is, by its very nature, neither germane to age-related degradation nor unique to the period covered by the Millstone license renewal application. Consequently, it makes no sense to spend the parties' and our own valuable resources litigating allegations of current deficiencies in a proceeding that is directed to future-oriented issues of aging," the decision stated.

The Commission pointed out there are other avenues by which the county can raise concerns about Millstone emergency planning. These include filing a petition for rulemaking or a petition requesting that

the NRC take enforcement or other action with regard to the facility's emergency plan.

Ultimately, the NRC did approve the proposal. But that decision was not made in haste and it was certainly not made without subjecting the application to a high level of scrutiny.

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