

United States Senate

December 21, 2023

The Honorable Christopher T. Hanson
Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Mail Stop O-16 B33
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Dear Chairman Hanson,

We write to express our concern regarding the proposed Common Fleet Emergency Plan in NextEra Energy's License Amendment Request (LAR).¹ This new proposed plan would limit emergency response capabilities, including by increasing the distance between the off-site emergency response facility and nuclear power plants managed by NextEra. As a result, communities in Massachusetts and New Hampshire that live within the emergency planning zone of NextEra Energy's Seabrook nuclear power plant would be exposed to greater risks, if an emergency should occur. As such, we urge you to uphold the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)'s mandate to ensure that nuclear power plants do not jeopardize the safety of the environment and the public by carefully evaluating NextEra's LAR and rejecting any changes that would increase threats to communities living near nuclear power stations.

In the LAR, NextEra proposes to implement a "Common Emergency Plan," which would consolidate emergency response services for four nuclear power plants in New Hampshire, Wisconsin, and Florida. According to NextEra's submission, this would relocate certain emergency response roles for all of these plants to a single, remote building in Juno Beach, Florida, leading to a significant, 50-percent increase in emergency response times for at least ten key positions, from 60 to 90 minutes.² Further, NextEra's LAR lists 49 changes that could be considered a "reduction in effectiveness" by the NRC—an alarming admission of decreased response capacity.³ The safety of communities living in the shadow of nuclear power plants, like those in Massachusetts near Seabrook Station, should not be a lesser priority than company convenience.

While emergency response facilities may be off-site up to 25 miles without NRC approval,⁴ NextEra's proposal would shift emergency response facilities—which are currently onsite at Seabrook Station and other plants—to a location approximately 1,200 miles away from Seabrook

¹ Dianne Strand, *License Amendment Request for Common Emergency Plan Consistent with NUREG0654, Revision 2*, Florida Power & Light Company (Oct. 4, 2022), <https://adamswebsearch2.nrc.gov/webSearch2/main.jsp?AccessionNumber=ML22278A031>.

² Justin C. Poole, *Summary of February 16 and May 18, 2022 Meetings with Nextera Energy/Florida Power & Light Company Regarding Planned Submittal of License Amendment Request for a Common Fleet Emergency Plan*, Nuclear Regulatory Commission (Sep. 14, 2022), <https://adamswebsearch2.nrc.gov/webSearch2/main.jsp?AccessionNumber=ML22144A002> at p. 31.

³ Letter from Sarah Abramson, Exec. Dir. C-10 Research & Education Foundation, Inc., to Edward J. Markey, United States Senator (Aug. 31, 2023).

⁴ [10 C.F.R. pt. 50, app. E, IV.E.8.b](#)

Station. Should severe weather, electrical issues, or other infrastructure damage occur, remote response capabilities are likely to be either severely diminished or fully offline—preventing the rapid mitigation of any emergency. The importance of emergency response proximity and timeliness cannot be overstated, especially with Seabrook Station’s existing concrete degradation issues and a higher-than-average rate of fire-safety violations.⁵

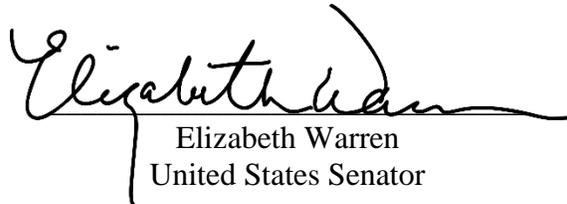
We strongly believe that the NRC’s pending decision must prioritize public safety over potential cost savings for the operator. The proposed changes in the LAR, including reductions in positions, functions, and increased response times, could compromise the ability to respond effectively to emergencies, putting the safety of the surrounding communities at risk. In light of these concerns, we urge the NRC to thoroughly evaluate the potential consequences of NextEra’s LAR and avoid approving any new plan that will increase safety risks to nearby communities. As part of this consideration, we ask NRC to assess the specific challenges posed by the distance between the proposed off-site emergency response facility and Seabrook Station, as well as the history of violations and concrete degradation at the Seabrook site.

Thank you for your consideration, and please keep us informed of any developments regarding the review and pending decision on NextEra’s LAR. We appreciate your dedication to the safety of the American people and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

⁵ Letter from Sarah Abramson, Exec. Dir. At C-10 Research & Education Foundation, Inc., to Justin C. Poole, Project Manager at Seabrook Station (Oct. 6, 2023).