

Substance of Statement by Senator Moran to NDCAP Meeting on July 25, 2022

There are two items that have recently passed in the legislature.

1. As part of the Senate's recently passed economic development package S.3018, An Act relating to economic growth and relief for the Commonwealth, Senator Susan Moran successfully advocated for the creation of a special commission to study the economic and environmental impacts of the discharge of spent fuel pool water and other materials created as a waste product of nuclear energy into the Commonwealth's waterways. The commission would be required to complete a report on their findings and recommendations by November 1, 2024, and hold four public hearings in Dukes, Plymouth, Bristol, and Barnstable Counties. Discharge of spent fuel pool water would be prohibited until 90 days after the completion of said report. This bill now goes to conference committee.
2. Amendment 577, Nuclear Monitoring and Oversight was included in the budget. This amendment would ensure that the owners and operators of current and decommissioned nuclear facilities bear the cost of ongoing oversight and monitoring. The same language was included in Governor Baker's budget proposal, House 2, in Sections 41 to 44. This amendment is vitally important for the health and safety of the communities near nuclear facilities. At present, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) funds protections against the potential impact of accidental radiation release or disturbances related to decommissioning using taxpayer dollars. This oversight is necessary, as national oversight over nuclear facilities like the Pilgrim Facility located in Plymouth is lacking, but instead of making up the gap, DPH faces a funding shortfall between \$160,000 and \$450,000 annually to 2027. Insufficient funding could potentially interfere with DPH's ability to provide much needed oversight. Lack of adequate oversight would have a profound effect on the Commonwealth's environmental and public health and the economy. This language would allow assessments against nuclear facility owners and operators for costs associated with accidental releases of radiation and disturbances related to the decommissioning process. In other words, this amendment would rightly shift some of the burden away from the taxpayer.

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