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Critics: Seabrook Station concrete cracks getting worse

By InDepthNH

AMESBURY — C-10 Research and Education Foundation, the citizen group that has monitored the Seabrook Station nuclear plant in Seabrook, New Hampshire, for decades, says it has sent a letter to the five commissioners of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission demanding federal intervention over a concrete degradation problem at the plant.

C-10 shares its concerns that this “concrete cancer” is getting worse faster than the

plant’s owner NextEra predicted, and that NextEra’s faulty testing program has not produced evidence that the plant can continue to operate safely.

At issue is alkali-silica reaction, or ASR, a chemical process that slowly cracks and weakens concrete. It is affecting safety-related concrete structures at Seabrook, including the containment building that houses the reactor — just a few miles from homes, beaches, and schools along the New Hampshire and Massachusetts seacoast, according to C-10. The plant

is about 10 miles from Cape Ann as the crow flies.

New findings show ASR is advancing faster and more extensively at Seabrook than NextEra Seabrook, LLC predicted ten years ago, and is now projected to exceed the safety limit set in the plant’s operating license as early as 2034, well before the operating license expires in 2050, according to C-10.

“What this means for our communities is that the tests NextEra has relied on for a decade to reassure regulators and the public don’t actually tell us if this weakened

concrete is safe enough — during earthquakes or every day operation,” said Sarah Abramson, executive director of C-10.

The group’s letter is grounded in a Declaration and Technical Assessment by Victor E. Saouma, Ph.D., a structural engineering and preeminent ASR expert who has testified before NRC safety oversight bodies that NextEra’s original testing relied on unrepresentative test specimens — simple beams rather than

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STAFF FILE PHOTO

Critics say the concrete cracking problems plaguing Seabrook Station are getting worse and they want the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to examine its testing standards

Collins Middle School special ed students earn two blue ribbons, three runners-up at Topsfield Fair



COURTESY PHOTOS

Collins Middle School special education students took home first and second place for their miniature pumpkins, first place in the escarole category, and second place for carrots and romaine lettuce at the Topsfield Fair Junior Fruit, Vegetable and Decorative Competition.

TOP MARKS

By News Staff

TOPSFIELD — Collins Middle School special education grade 6-8 students received two first place ribbons and three for second place last Sunday at the Topsfield Fair Junior Fruit, Vegetable and Decorative Competition.

The ribbons mark the students’ best result in three years of submitting to the competition. Collins students received first and second place in the miniature pumpkins category as well as first place in the escarole category. They also received second place plaudits in the carrots and romaine lettuce categories.

“They were thrilled to see their winning vegetables and loved hearing other fair-goers congratulate them on their good work,” said Barbara McLernon, an

instructional paraprofessional at Collins who oversees the gardening program.

Last year, Collins students won second place in the beets category and third place in the carrots category, which are grown over the spring and summer in garden beds outside the middle school and harvested in late September.

In 2024, Collins students won first place in the beet category and second in the carrots category. Per the competition rules, students under 18 must grow, pick, submit and arrange a minimum five types of fruits and/or vegetables themselves at their exhibit space. Fruits and vegetables are judged by trueness to type, arrangement, freedom from disease and injury, condition, and

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These pint-sized gourds took first place in the miniature pumpkins category.

DiZoglio targets caps on liquor licenses

By Katie Castellani

» State House News Service

BOSTON — Adding to an ongoing debate on Beacon Hill that has a potential solution tied up in legislative negotiations, Auditor Diana DiZoglio is renewing calls to grant municipalities more authority over how many on-premises liquor licenses they can issue. Meanwhile, a key hospitality group is calling for protections for license holders.

DiZoglio’s office said a 1933 state law that established a population-based quota for how many liquor licenses most municipalities can receive creates a shortage because it doesn’t account for local demand. As a result, prospective licensees — especially smaller or first-time businesses — can face greater barriers to accessing licenses, a report released Tuesday found.

“We need a liquor licensing system that is transparent, fair, and gives all of our local businesses a shot at success,” DiZoglio said in a statement.

“You shouldn’t need to have unlimited access to money and all of the right political connections to obtain a liquor license. We need to do better, and our report shines a light on how and why the system is falling short. Massachusetts does not have to choose between responsible alcohol regulation and economic opportunity. Both are possible.”

DiZoglio also said her office’s study offers “evidence-based insights” to boost access to licenses and establish a system that is more transparent and receptive to businesses.

Licensees can pursue home rule petitions if their municipality has hit its quota, but the report found the process to be “opaque, inconsistent, and unpredictable” — mirroring sentiments of municipal leaders. A licensee can also purchase a license from another business through a secondary market or consider relocating to another municipality, although the report found that these options can be expensive, with some licenses selling for hundreds

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‘A sight to behold’ Indigenous Peoples Day draws large crowd

By Matt Petry

» Staff Writer

NEWBURYPORT — For the more than 1,000 people who attended Saturday’s Indigenous Peoples Day in Waterfront Park, the theme of the day was likely learning about a rich culture filled with history and bursting with importance.

Throw in the launching of a handmade canoe-shaped vessel called a mishoon into the Merrimack River, and the sixth annual event was a major success, according to organizers and those who attended.

“The weather was great,” Imagine Studios Executive Director Kristine Malpica said. “Everyone that

presented really was well received, the culture bearers and educators and singers and dancers and drummers and entire Indigenous families that came — two or three generations in some cases that shared their beautiful traditions of artistry and dance and singing, and we had the mishoon launch. It was awesome.”

A joint effort of Imagine Studios and the city, the event ran from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. It came two days before Monday’s national holiday of the same name.

Kicking off the event was the opening ceremony and fire lighting featuring emcee Larry Spotted Crow Mann as well as intertribal representatives and elected



KEITH SULLIVAN/Photos

Elder Chickie Red Dawn and Alyssa “Brightmoon” Nock during Indigenous Peoples Day on Saturday in Newburyport.

officials.

Ward 2 City Councilor Stephanie Niketic said she was there for the opening ceremony.

“I think it is always unique to hear from people from our Massachusetts tribes talk about their feelings for this land, the history of it, and their history

in it,” Niketic said.

A corn husk doll-making workshop with Toodie Coombs (Mashpee Wampanoag); plant weaving demonstrations with Elizabeth Perry (Aquinnah Wampanoag); and family art activities with Sarah

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SCOTUS declines to hear case of lobsterman who opposes boat tracking

By Patrick Whittle

» Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine — The Supreme Court has declined to hear the case of a lobster fisherman who alleged the government requiring commercial fishing boats to use electronic tracking devices amounts to unreasonable search and seizure.

Maine lobster fisherman Frank Thompson sued after his state began requiring all federally permitted lobstermen to install GPS trackers on their boats to collect data that will help manage the industry. Thompson appealed to the high court after losing at the appeals court level.

The Supreme Court formally denied Thompson’s petition on Oct. 5. The decision allows the state to collect “critically important”

data, Maine Department of Marine Resources Commissioner Carl Wilson said.

“It will inform the lobster stock assessment, enhance offshore enforcement, and support better decision-making in a range of federal management contexts,” he said in a prepared statement.

Thompson’s lawsuit raised questions about the limits of government surveillance and the ways commercial fisheries are managed. Pacific Legal Foundation, which represented Thompson, said in a Tuesday statement that “the fight over whether the government can use industry regulations to sidestep Fourth Amendment protections is far from over.”

The foundation said in a blog post that the court’s

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