

From: Eliot Brenner
To: haltschiller@seacoastonline.com
Date: Mon, Aug 7, 2006 5:07 PM
Subject: Letter to the editor Hampton Union and Portsmouth Herald (it ran in both papers). You can sign it or

Mr. Altschiller: Last week an editorial ran in the Hampton Union and Portsmouth Herald . I would like to offer this letter in response for your letters section.

Sir:

Your Aug. 2 editorial critical of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's \$65,000 fine for security violations warrants a response to provide your readers another perspective.

In some respects, the size of the fine we levied is immaterial. Civil penalties are not necessarily meant to be punitive. Why? What's important is that the nuclear industry was sent a clear message that the NRC will not tolerate security deficiencies. Adverse publicity can act as a powerful deterrent.

While one part of Seabrook's defenses were partially degraded, it was only one element of a defense-in-depth system that includes cameras, armed patrols, vehicle barriers, substantial setback distances and more.

Because of the problem that we identified, Seabrook was subjected to far more scrutiny of its security so we could satisfy ourselves that it met our stringent requirements.

The NRC's mission is to protect public health, safety, security and the environment. Part of that is setting very high standards for nuclear plant operators to meet. We do not advocate nuclear energy. We regulate its use - in a firm but fair manner - to ensure the public is protected. And, when necessary, we shine a spotlight on a problem to send a message.

Sincerely,

Eliot Brenner
Director, Office of Public Affairs
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission