

PRESS RELEASE

NRC Scapegoats Davis-Besse Whistleblower

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Washington, DC - Today the NRC stooped to a new low – scapegoating Andrew Siemaszko, the engineer at Davis-Besse whose efforts to protect the public were thwarted by plant management and the NRC’s own lax enforcement. In a classic case of shooting the messenger, the NRC barred an innocent man from working in the industry, while ignoring wrong-doing and negligence by plant managers and the NRC itself. In tandem with issuing a Notice of Violation and Proposed Imposition of Civil Penalties - \$5,450,000 to FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission today issued an Order Prohibiting Involvement in NRC-Licensed Activities (NRC Special Inspection Report No. 50-346/2002-08(DRS)) against Mr. Siemaszko.

The NRC acted without a prior hearing or any semblance of due process. Once the facts are disclosed, the public will know that Mr. Siemaszko is the engineer who tried to clean from the head of the reactor the corrosive boric acid that ultimately ate a hole almost completely through the stainless steel. The facts will show that the NRC has willfully ignored substantial evidence of a complete failure of the safety culture at Davis-Besse, and the resulting failure to respond to evidence of boric acid accumulation since at least 1996, as well as the evidence of rusting available to the NRC itself through pictures and other information evidencing rust and corrosion in the reactor head. The public will learn that Mr. Siemaszko, who did not begin to work at the plant until mid-1999, was the courageous individual who tried to clean the reactor head during the 2000 outage and objected when plant management, rushing to put the plant back into service, stopped his efforts.

“This is an outrage. The public deserves to know what really happened at Davis-Besse and why. To blame this debacle on Andrew Siemaszko is like blaming 9/11 on Richard Clarke. The allegations made by the NRC reveal the agency’s serious misunderstanding of the facts, at best, or deliberate misrepresentation, at worst. Today’s announcement may cover up the NRC’s own failed oversight and the company’s failed safety culture, for a time, but will not do so permanently. We are going to demand a hearing and look forward to the presentation of the true story of what happened at Davis-Besse, and why.”

Billie Garde
Attorney for Andrew Siemaszko