

From: "Paul M Blanch" <pdblanch@home.com> PUBLIC
To: "NRC CONCERNS" <NRC_CONCERNS@onelist.com>
Date: Sunday, January 14, 2001 12:11 AM
Subject: FW: Portland Press Herald -- MY NRC Nonpublic Report

-----Original Message-----

From: Peter/Kris Christine [mailto:LedgeSpring@lincoln.midcoast.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 10, 2001 6:54 AM
To: Seacoast Anti-Pollution League; Ray Shadis; Paul & Connie Best; Nancy Allen; Mike Herz; Mary Lampert; Jim Riccio; Jim & Debby Hidu; Henry Myers; Glen Mills; Edward Myers; Debby Katz; David Lochbaum
Subject: Portland Press Herald -- MY NRC Nonpublic Report

Greetings! Here's a story from today's Portland Press Herald. If you will recall, activists squawked loud and clear years ago that granting Maine Yankee permission to drop its off-site preparedness for radiological emergency was premature, especially in light of the fact that NRC still hadn't finished its analyses of zirc-clad fire potential in spent fuel pools. Paul Blanch was raising the alarm about spent fuel pool potential and how NRC was misleading the public as to its oft-ignored danger. Ray's voice was raised on security measures as well. What's going to happen now, is Maine Yankee going to be compelled to reinstall all those sirens at additional cost to the ratepayers when they shouldn't have been allowed to dismantle them in the first place? Enough raving, here's the article.

Cheers, Kris

Wednesday, January 10, 2001

Report revisits risk of storing nuclear fuel

By MEREDITH GOAD and SUSAN RAYFIELD, Portland Press Herald Writers

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WISCASSET — A new report from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission will examine the risks of storing spent fuel at offline nuclear power plants such as Maine Yankee, where fuel rods now sit under water in a pool.

The report, which may be released later this week, could raise new questions about the radiation dangers posed during a catastrophic event such as an earthquake or terrorist attack at decommissioned plants.

Although there is much speculation about what the report says, its exact contents are still unclear.

"I just can't comment on a report that's not been released yet," said Victor L. Dricks, an NRC spokesman in Washington, D.C.

The commission has been working with the nuclear power industry on the issue of spent fuel storage for the past year and a half.

The NRC began the new risk assessment after Maine Yankee asked for and received permission to reduce its off-site emergency planning. Maine Yankee argued that any credible accident scenario would not result in a significant health risk to the public, and the federal agency agreed.

Anti-nuclear activists and state emergency management officials opposed the plan to eliminate emergency evacuation drills and sirens in neighboring communities to warn the public of accidents at the plant.

Now, a nuclear engineer with the Union of Concerned Scientists, a longtime critic of nuclear power, says the new commission report will conclude that, in the event of a catastrophe, spent nuclear fuel rods pose a greater public health risk than previously thought.

David Lochbaum said that under certain conditions, such as an earthquake or sabotage by a terrorist group, spent fuel pools could release more radiation

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than expected.

"It may be that some additional security is required around plants, and it may be that some plants are OK today," he said. "The first step in that is to know what the danger is, and I think this report tells us that."

Lochbaum said he has not read the report himself, but has spoken with commission staff about it and participated in discussions of its contents. If he is correct regarding the report's conclusions, it raises the question of whether some off-site security measures at Maine Yankee might have to be restored.

Kris Christine, an anti-nuclear activist who lives in Alna, said it was "outrageous" that the commission allowed Maine Yankee to drop its off-site emergency preparedness in the first place.

"No longer do fire departments and emergency crews practice drills in the event of a radiological emergency," she said. "Now all of a sudden we're finding that spent fuel poses more of a risk than previously believed. . . . It's so infuriating when you have a family and you're concerned about their welfare."

Eric Howes, a Maine Yankee spokesman, would not comment on the report. "We haven't seen it, so it's not fair for us to speculate on what might be in it," he said.

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