EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: 05/17/04

EDO CONTROL: G20040237
DOC DT: 03/24/04
FINAL REPLY:

Diana Sidebotham
Peter Alexander
New England Coalition

TO:

Chairman Diaz

FOR SIGNATURE OF : ** GRN ** CRC NO: 04-0190

Dyer, NRR

DESC:

Independent Safety Assessment of Vermont Yankee

ROUTING:

Travers
Norry
Paperiello
Kane
Collins
Dean
Burns/Cyr
Miller, RI

DATE: 04/02/04

ASSIGNED TO: CONTACT:

NRR Dyer

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

Ref. G20040228.

Template: SECY-017

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

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PAPER NUMBER:	LTR-04-0190	LOGGING DATE:	03/31/2004
ACTION OFFICE:	EDO		
AUTHOR:	Diana Sidebotham		
AFFILIATION:	VT		
ADDRESSEE:	Nils Diaz		
SUBJECT:	Independent Safety Assessment at Vermont Yankee		
ACTION:	Direct Reply		
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LETTER DATE:	03/24/2004		
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DATE DUE:	~~04/22/2004~~ 5/17/04	DATE SIGNED:	

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New England Coalition

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POST OFFICE BOX 545, BRATTLEBORO, VERMONT 05302

CHAIRMAN REC'D
04 MAR 30 AM 10: 28

The Honorable Nils J. Diaz
Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

March 24, 2004

ATTN: Document Control Desk

Dear Chairman Diaz:

On behalf of our members and constituents throughout the New England region, New England Coalition now respectfully requests that you order an Independent Safety Assessment (ISA) to be performed prior to any NRC decision regarding a proposed extended power uprate (EPU) at Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station in Vernon, Vermont.

New England Coalition's request supports, but is distinct, from similar requests recently forwarded by the Vermont Public Service Board and the Vermont State Senate.

While we welcome the recent letter of the Vermont Public Service Board, which calls for an "Independent Engineering Assessment" (IEA), as a good step in the right direction, we are concerned that the IEA as described by the board falls far short of the kind of comprehensive assessment needed to reassure the public that present assumed margins of safety can be maintained at the plant under EPU.

We believe such reassurance could be gained through an ISA that meets the goals and objectives set forth in the Vermont Senate Resolution of March 15, 2004

1) Assesses the conformance of the facility to its design and licensing bases, for operating at both 100 percent and 120 percent of its originally intended power production level;

2) Identifies all deviations, exemptions and/or waivers from (a) regulatory requirements applicable to Vermont Yankee and (b) regulatory requirements applicable to a new nuclear reactor (i.e. today's safety regulations) and verifies that adequate safety margins are retained despite the cumulative effect of such deviations, exemptions, and/or waivers for both the present licensed power level and under the proposed extended power uprate;

3) Assesses the facility's operational safety performance giving risk perspectives where appropriate;

4) Evaluates the effectiveness of licensee self-assessments, corrective actions, and improvement plans; and

5) Determines the root cause(s) of safety-significant findings and draws conclusions on overall performance

Given that the plant is now over 31 years old and that it is about to enter a new phase where its operators, systems, and components will be subjected to substantially increased stress, we believe that a full Independent Safety Assessment, or its equivalent, is an appropriate, conservative, and prudent measure.

We are confident that you will understand our use of the term "Independent Safety Assessment" to mean an assessment similar in scope and scale to that ordered for the Maine Yankee Atomic Power Station by your predecessor, Dr. Shirley Jackson.

New England Coalition is formally requesting, therefore, that you exercise your prerogative as Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to order a full Independent Safety Assessment at Vermont Yankee as a prerequisite to any decision regarding the pending application for extended power uprate.

New England Coalition now eagerly awaits your response and looks forward to any opportunity you might offer for further dialogue regarding NRC oversight of Vermont Yankee...

Sincerely,

Diana Sidebotham
Acting President

Peter Alexander
Executive Director

Cc: Governor James Douglas
Governor Craig Benson
Governor Mitt Romney
Governor George Pataki
Senator Patrick Leahy
Senator James Jeffords
Senator Ted Kennedy
Senator John Kerry
Senator Hilary Clinton
Senator Chuck Shumer
Senator Judd Gregg
Senator John Sununu
Vt. State Senate President Pro Tempore Peter Welch
Vt. House Speaker Walter Freed
VPSB Chair Michael Dworkin