



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

CHAIRMAN

May 4, 2004

The Honorable Jim Jeffords
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Jeffords:

I am responding on behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to your letter of March 31, 2004, concerning the request by Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee, LLC, and Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc. (Entergy), to amend the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station license to increase the power level of the facility. You had written in response to NRC's Executive Director for Operations' letter dated March 29, 2004, which indicated that the NRC would hold a public meeting in the vicinity of Vermont Yankee to answer the public's questions regarding the proposed power uprate. The March 29th letter was not intended to address the request from the Vermont Public Service Board to conduct an independent engineering assessment. I apologize for any confusion that letter may have caused.

On May 4, 2004, I sent a letter to the Vermont Public Service Board explaining the NRC's approach in response to their request for an independent engineering assessment. I enclose a copy of that letter for your information. The NRC plans to use an improved engineering inspection at Vermont Yankee, as described in the enclosed letter. This new engineering inspection will consider information from the Vermont Yankee power uprate submittal and operating experience from other plants to thoroughly assess the capabilities of critical safety systems at both current and proposed uprate levels. This inspection approach will enhance our already thorough review of the proposed power uprate at Vermont Yankee.

The NRC takes its responsibility of ensuring the public's safety very seriously and considers an extended power uprate to be a significant licensing action. The NRC staff has concluded that the detailed technical review, combined with the inspections prescribed by the reactor oversight process, as enhanced by an engineering inspection, is the most effective method of forming its decision on whether Vermont Yankee can safely operate under uprated power conditions.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Nils J. Diaz

Enclosure:
Letter to Vermont Public Service Board



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CHAIRMAN

May 4, 2004

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Leahy:

I am responding on behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to your letter of March 31, 2004, concerning the request by Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee, LLC, and Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc. (Entergy), to amend the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station license to increase the power level of the facility. You had written in response to NRC's Executive Director for Operations' letter dated March 29, 2004, which indicated that the NRC would hold a public meeting in the vicinity of Vermont Yankee to answer the public's questions regarding the proposed power uprate. The March 29th letter was not intended to address the request from the Vermont Public Service Board to conduct an independent engineering assessment. I apologize for any confusion that letter may have caused.

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CHAIRMAN

May 4, 2004

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Sanders:

I am responding on behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to your letter of March 31, 2004, concerning the request by Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee, LLC, and Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc. (Entergy), to amend the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station license to increase the power level of the facility. You had written in response to NRC's Executive Director for Operations' letter dated March 29, 2004, which indicated that the NRC would hold a public meeting in the vicinity of Vermont Yankee to answer the public's questions regarding the proposed power uprate. The March 29th letter was not intended to address the request from the Vermont Public Service Board to conduct an independent engineering assessment. I apologize for any confusion that letter may have caused.

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Nils J. Diaz

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