



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

CHAIRMAN

May 4, 2004

The Honorable John E. Sununu
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Sununu:

I am responding on behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to the letter from your Director of Projects, Mr. William T. Wroblewski, dated March 26, 2004, which forwarded a letter from New Hampshire State Representative Barbara Hull Richardson, expressing concerns about the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station. Mr. Wroblewski's letter requested that the NRC provide information that addresses the issues raised by Representative Richardson, including concerns about a request by the licensee to amend the Vermont Yankee license to increase the power level of the facility.

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. The NRC staff has concluded that the detailed technical review, combined with the inspections prescribed by the reactor oversight process, as enhanced by a new engineering inspection, is the most effective method of informing its decision on whether Vermont Yankee could safely operate under uprated power conditions.

Representative Richardson also expressed concerns regarding continued operation of Vermont Yankee, insurance coverage related to the Price-Anderson Act, and spent fuel storage. The NRC staff is still evaluating these issues and will reply to them in separate correspondence.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Nils J. Diaz

Enclosure:
Letter to the Vermont Public Service Board