

June 4, 2004

The Honorable Judd Gregg
United States Senator
125 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Senator Gregg:

I am responding on behalf of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to your letter dated May 4, 2004, in which you forwarded a copy of a letter from the Board of Selectmen for the town of Hinsdale, New Hampshire. In their letter, the Selectmen of Hinsdale expressed concern for the safety of their town's residents, relating to a request by Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc., to increase the generating capacity of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station (Vermont Yankee) by 20 percent. They also asked that your office support the request for a comprehensive independent safety assessment of the facilities.

The NRC sent a letter to the Vermont Public Service Board on May 4, 2004, in response to their request for an independent engineering assessment. I am enclosing a copy of that letter, which describes our plans to use an improved engineering inspection at Vermont Yankee. The NRC staff has concluded that its detailed technical review, combined with its inspections prescribed by the reactor oversight process, as enhanced by a new engineering inspection, is the most effective method of determining whether Vermont Yankee can safely operate under uprated power conditions. We believe this approach is responsive to the Public Service Board's request, and therefore is also responsive to the request of the Board of Selectmen for the Town of Hinsdale, New Hampshire.

For current information on the NRC's review of the proposed power uprate, please see the Vermont Yankee webpage on the NRC's website at www.nrc.gov/reactors/plant-specific-items/vermont-yankee-issues.html.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Luis A. Reyes
Executive Director
for Operations

Enclosure: Letter to the Vermont Public Service Board

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