May 27, 2004

Ms. Jane Newton
P.O. Box 121
South Londonderry, VT 05155

Dear Ms. Newton:

I am responding on behalf of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to your letter dated March 3, 2004, requesting that an independent safety assessment be conducted at the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station (Vermont Yankee).

Regarding your concern for the need of an independent safety assessment at Vermont Yankee, I am enclosing, for your information, a letter that we sent to the Public Service Board on May 4, 2004, explaining the NRC's approach in addressing this issue. The NRC plans to use an improved engineering inspection at Vermont Yankee, as described in the enclosure. The NRC staff has concluded that a detailed technical review, combined with inspections prescribed by the reactor oversight process, as enhanced by a new engineering inspection, is the most effective means for our staff to determine whether Vermont Yankee can safely operate under uprated power conditions. The NRC will not approve the Vermont Yankee uprate, or any proposed change to a plant license, unless the NRC staff can conclude that the proposed change will be executed in a manner that assures the public's health and safety.

The NRC values your comments on this issue. I believe the enclosed information, which describes our review and inspection procedure, along with our plans for a new engineering inspection, will assist in addressing your concerns regarding the safety of Vermont Yankee. Additional information about the on-going review process is also available on our NRC website at www.nrc.gov/reactors/plant-specific-items/vermont-yankee-issues.html

Sincerely,

/RA/

Cornelius F. Holden, Director
Project Directorate I
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure: Letter to the Vermont Public Service Board

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