

August 27, 2004

Mr. David O'Brien, Commissioner  
State of Vermont  
Department of Public Service  
112 State Street  
Drawer 20  
Montpelier, VT 05620-2601

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

I am responding to your letter to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), dated June 9, 2004, expressing concerns over a proposed modification to the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station (VYNPS) design bases. Your concerns focused on Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee, LLC and Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.'s (Entergy) July 31, 2003, application requesting a revision to the design bases of the VYNPS to support the application of an alternate source term methodology. In particular, you stated that the proposal should not be approved for the following reasons:

1. The standby liquid control system does not appear to meet the single failure criteria appropriate for a system used to mitigate the consequences of a design basis accident.
2. The main steam isolation valve (MSIV) alternate leakage treatment pathway does not appear to meet the quality standards appropriate for a system used to mitigate the consequences of a design basis accident; and,
3. There is no reason to double the amount of allowed leakage from MSIV's.

The NRC staff is continuing to review Entergy's request and has not made a final decision on the acceptability of the proposal. We understand your concerns and will consider them in our review of the application. All comments received will be addressed in the safety evaluation documenting the NRC staff's conclusions. We thank you for taking the time to evaluate the application and provide us with your comments.

Sincerely,

***/RA by JLyons for/***

Ledyard Marsh, Director  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-271

cc: See next page

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Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station

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Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station

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