RAS 8839

Gill-Montague
Regional School District

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The Office of the Secretary,
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001
Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudication Staff
hearingdocket@nrc.gov

DOCKETED
USNRC

November 10, 2004 (9:54am)

OFFICE OF SECRETARY
RULEMAKINGS AND
ADJUDICATIONS STAFF

Docket No. 50-271-OLA

cc:

Alex S. Karlin, Chairman of the ASLB panel at:
Atomic Safety and Licensing Board
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Mail Stop T-3 F23, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001
ask2@nrc.gov

November 9, 2004

Honorable Adjudicators:

The Gill-Montague Regional School District lies partly within the 10-mile emergency evacuation zone of the VT Yankee nuclear reactor, and wholly within about 20 miles of the reactor. As School Committee members, we are deeply concerned about Entergy's request to increase power at the VT Yankee nuclear reactor. We are aware that similar uprates at other reactors of this type have caused costly shutdowns due to potentially dangerous steam dryer cracking and valve jamming. The accidental release of increased radioactive steam due to valves jamming open, should the structural integrity of the steam dryers fail, increases health risks to children in our schools. The evacuation plans in existence now have never been actually tested, and simulations have repeatedly failed to include private nursery schools in the town of Gill. This is of great concern to us. Although the evacuation plans are outside of NRC purview, the level of our concern, and the need for public confidence in any increase of power, and nuclear waste and emissions at the plant should be apparent to you.

Last Spring, the Gill-Montague Regional School Committee sent a letter to the VT Public Service Board asking them to require an independent safety inspection at the Entergy-VT Yankee nuclear power plant and to make their decision regarding a power uprate conditional upon a review of the plant similar to the one conducted at MaineYankee before its closure. We were joined by many state and federal officials in VT and MA in making this request to the NRC and the Public Service Board. NRC denied the request. We continue to consider our request reasonable. Maine citizens were given the benefit of a complete and thorough safety inspection: for our children's sake, we consider it necessary in this case. Our confidence in the safety of the

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ENVY plant under current, let alone uprated, conditions is not gained by the brief NRC engineering assessment released on the NRC website recently, nor are our concerns about safety allayed by recent events at the plant.

We ask again for an open, transparent, and thorough process of evaluating the new conditions involved in the uprate, and their impact on emissions, accident scenarios, and safety. We ask that, at minimum, a full, open, public hearing be held, with intervenors allowed to cross examine witnesses under oath, to enable a factual information base known to all parties and the public to be established on which to evaluate the uprate.

We trust that your decision will be in the best interest of the public.

Sincerely,

Joyce Phillips, Chair
Gill-Montague Regional School Committee