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Date: 12/18/2006 10:37:52 AM
Subject: NRC Review of LRA for Vermont Yankee Station

This is a letter that I wrote to the Senior Project Manager for the NRC Division for License Renewal for the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station in Vernon, Vermont: Richard Emch, Jr. I have no idea whether this letter will be answered by him so I am hoping the public will be informed by it and encouraged to take action:

Dear Richard Emch, Jr.

In regard to the NRC staff review and environmental scoping summary report of Entergy's Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station, I would like to make the following comments and questions:

1. Do you and your staff consider yourselves to be employed by Entergy or the residents of the USA? Your reports (in both tone and format) show absolutely no evidence of compassion for or interest in the concerns of the citizens who live in close proximity to the Vermont Yankee Station.

2. If you are indeed representing the interests of the US citizens who live near nuclear power stations across the US, why have you constructed your reviews and policies in such a way as to make it impossible for those citizens and their local governmental officials to express their concerns and force companies like Entergy to seriously respond to them?

3. In writing a summary of the June 6&7 2006 scoping meeting, you edited the letters and comments by leaving out large sections of commentary and by chopping each comment into incoherent and small parts of the whole and reordering them. The comments no longer resemble the original texts and verbal comments made by those citizens who spent many hours writing and researching their questions. This appears to be a form of censorship of the public voice. Is this standard NRC operating procedure?

4. It appears that the only written comments that are going to be followed up by further research or response by your team are those that concern wildlife and power lines and the ecology of the Connecticut River which is overheating as it cools the reactor at Vernon, VT. While this is a serious concern, it is and was NOT the most serious concern expressed by the people who spoke or wrote to the NRC in June 2006. There were hundreds of comments and questions about public safety and security issues (everything from cracks in the aging facility, to the risks of terrorists breaching the weak security system, to concerns about the unusual and dangerous storage of "spent" nuclear fuel control rods, to operational errors and other problems that have actually caused releases of radioactivity at other Nuclear Stations). To all these serious questions and comments, you repeated this comment over and over again: "The comments are out side the scope of the license renewal review and provide no new information: therefore, they will not be evaluated further." Is it legal to construct a government license renewal in such a way that the most serious public safety issues are "outside the scope of the review"? Is this standard operating procedure in any other governmental agencies besides the NRC?

5. On p.60 of your report it says, "As part of the license renewal process, it is assumed the safety design basis of the plant will be maintained and

the plant will continue to meet all the NRC regulations." If you and the other reviewers continuously ASSUME that the design and upkeep of the facility will "meet all NRC regulations", what is the purpose of the review process except to be a mindless formality? On closer examination of the review process, it appears that the NRC has constructed a process of review that can ignore all questions of public safety by assuming that they are irrelevant or too vague or cannot be proven. Then the NRC appears to totally ignore these issues except when sued by the public whom they are supposedly representing. This is the key question: what is it that you are NOT reviewing and why is this acceptable? It is obviously not acceptable for those of us who have to live and work and raise our families near the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Facility.

6. What scientific basis is there for the assumption that over the next 30 years there will not be ANY new or old cracking or aging problems, operational errors, terrorism or vandalism, natural disasters (such as flooding or earthquakes) that could cause an accidental release of radioactivity or an even more serious problem at the Vermont Yankee facility? Inspectors of bridges and tunnels have recently given satisfactory safety reports mere months before the bridges and tunnels they just inspected have suddenly collapsed. What reason does the public have to believe that NRC inspectors will do significantly better with their inspections and reviews over the next 40 years?

7. In an area where almost all of us rely on a healthy and nearly pristine environment to make a living (producing agricultural products, tourism, education, and services for these people), even a small release of radioactivity would be disastrous to our economy. Why isn't this serious economic issue under review?

I trust that you will seriously respond to this letter which is being sent to local news outlets because it represents the concerns of dozens of my personal friends, relative, and neighbors, particularly those under 18 who cannot even vote at all.

Sincerely,

Emma Stamas

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