

NPA-SD-LR

From: Marjorie McLaughlin
To: A Randolph Blough; David Lew; James Clifford; Marc Dapas; Marsha Gamberoni; Samuel Collins
Date: 02/28/2007 4:58:29 PM
Subject: Summary of Vermont Meetings

Good Afternoon:

As you are aware, NRR DLR staff briefed members of the Vermont State legislature yesterday evening on the Draft SEIS for the VY license renewal application. Region I staff supported NRR in this meeting. Additionally, prior to the meeting, I met with the Vt Department of Public Service for outreach and to discuss the SLO-Designee's retirement. A brief summary of these meetings follows:

1) Meeting with Vt DPS:

I met with David O'Brien, Commissioner, Sarah Hofmann, Esq, Director of Public Affairs, and Bill Sherman, Nuclear Engineer. We discussed the role of the DPS in the State's Energy policy, the upcoming challenges they face with the VY license renewal, and the SLO program. The most notable topics discussed were:

A) Cmr O'Brien informed me that the State will be undertaking an large-scale effort to gauge the opinions of the citizens of Vermont on nuclear power and on the license renewal of VY. They will be conducting "Deliberative Polling," a method that was invented by researchers at the University of Texas. In the words of UT, "Deliberative Polling brings a representative sample of people together, provides information from both sides of an issue and then allows them the opportunity to talk about those issues. The process, developed by Dr. James Fishkin of the Department of Government at The University of Texas at Austin, provides a glimpse of the way information and discussion can change people's minds."

The DPS contracted with UT to conduct these polls. The information they gather will be provided to the State Legislature, and will likely inform how they vote on the economic value of VY's license renewal. Entergy has agreed to abide by the State's vote on their relicensure.

Cmr O'Brien said that he may require some assistance from NRC in gathering the information needed for the educational part of the polling. I agreed to assist in any way he needs. He will contact me with his specific needs as the time draws closer. They will be starting the process in late spring. It will consist of 3 public meetings around the State, followed by the polling.

B) Bill Sherman retired from the Vt DPS today. His position has been offered to 2 applicants, both of whom turned down the offers. They will be operating without a Nuclear Engineer for the near term while they continue to search for a replacement. Cmr O'Brien requested that we communicate with Sarah Hofmann in the interim. She has been working closely with Bill for the past few years, and is quite knowledgeable about VY. I asked the Cmr to send a letter to FSME (Rathburn) to name a new SLO-Designee when he hires a Nuclear Engineer. We discussed not naming a designee, but Cmr O'Brien wishes to do this when he has someone in place.

C) Cmr O'Brien provided his opinion that NRC can do more outreach in Vermont to inform the public and the legislature about nuclear power and about radiation and its effects. I discussed with him the Congressional Outreach program, and said that we are looking for more opportunities to perform such outreach. This discussion led to our discussion described in Item A above.

2) Vermont Legislature Meeting:

I know you heard some feedback already about this meeting. I would like to add that NRR (Richard Emch, in particular), did a commendable job of remaining courteous and professional, while being sure to answer all questions as completely as possible. I learned a lot from watching him and the other NRR

folks at work! We took a lot of questions on the viability of Yucca mountain, and were being held accountable for its delay, as representatives of the Federal Government. We explained the Waste Confidence Act, and the assumptions under which the staff (as directed by the Commission) operates with respect to waste disposal for license renewal considerations. The legislators were particularly concerned with the idea that waste must be removed from a site 30 years after the license is terminated. They asked if this is based on safety and, if so, if a license is renewed for an additional 20 years, how is it now safe for the waste to remain on site that much longer. Mitzi explained that this requirement considers the staffing of sites after they are decommissioned, and that the integrity of the waste storage facilities (ISFSI or wet storage) is monitored and that the licenses for these facilities must also be removed and the safety evaluated. In short, the legislators who asked these questions were not satisfied that a long-term storage solution exists, and are wary of creating more waste.

At the meeting, there were about 10-13 legislators, and maybe 35-40 observers (press, Entergy, DPS, and the public). The observers were pretty respectful. A couple of times, they tried to interject questions themselves, but Rep Deen did not allow them to get very far before he reminded them that this meeting was for the legislators. The State provided 2 Sergeants-at-Arms, who were in street clothes. They escorted us to our cars. We stayed after for about 35-40 minutes and talked with several of the legislators and some members of the public. We left at about 1830. NRR took several hand-written comments from the meeting attendees for consideration on the SEIS.

Dave Pelton suggested that I attend the VY EOC meeting in April to perform follow-up outreach to these legislators. Neil Sheehan also suggested something similar. I would like to do this, if that is acceptable to management.

I will include more details on the above in an addendum to the trip report I am completing from the first trip to Vermont a few weeks ago. I'm happy to answer any questions in the meantime.

VR,
Marjorie

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