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Donnie Ashley

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To: Bruce Boger; Donnie Ashley; Louise Lund; Samson Lee
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NRC Questions Entergy's Metal Fatigue Calculation Process. The Brattleboro Reformer (4/5, Audette) reports, "Issues related to metal fatigue at Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant, raised by the New England Coalition on Nuclear Pollution in contentions filed in the relicensing of the facility in Vernon, have raised concerns at Oyster Creek nuclear generating station in Ocean County, N.J. NEC challenged the way Entergy," calculated "the effects of metal fatigue on certain key components and piping. The Advisory Committee on Reactor Safety took up the issue of Entergy's calculations used to determine wear and tear on the reactor recirculation outlet, the feedwater nozzle and the core spray line nozzles in a series of meetings earlier this year. Entergy maintained that its formula showed the fatigue would meet the safety criteria that would allow the plant to operate for an additional 20 years past its license expiration in 2012." The Reformer adds, "After its review of the calculations, the ACRS recommended approval of Entergy's application but with the caveat that the NRC require Entergy to conduct analyses of the nozzles over the next two years. Before the plant receives final approval, Entergy must complete those analyses and document them as part of the final safety evaluation report." NRC staffers "have looked at conditions at other nuclear power plants because of the metal fatigue issues raised at Yankee, said," NRC PAO Neal Sheehan. 'Did (Oyster Creek) use a method that was too simplified?' asked Sheehan. 'After looking at it, we think that might be the case.'"

NRC Wants Oyster Creek To Conduct New Evaluation Of Recirculation Nozzles. The Asbury Park Press (4/7, Bates) reports, "The US Nuclear Regulatory Commission last week asked Oyster Creek to re-analyze whether the five water recirculation nozzles on the reactor vessel will undergo too much metal fatigue over the years, according to NRC officials. If a nozzle breaks, 'it could lead to a severe accident,' NRC spokesman Neil A. Sheehan said. 'It would be a challenging situation for the control room operators.'" Oyster Creek "spokeswoman Beth Rapczynski said 'we believe that the analysis will come out similar' to the original one, which showed the nozzles would meet code requirements, and 'we don't believe that this represents a significant delay for our license renewal application.'" The plant's "recirculation system forces water through the reactor core, allowing higher reactor power than with natural circulation, according to an e-mail from Sheehan. 'Water flows out of one nozzle, then is pumped back in near the bottom, goes through the (uranium) fuel, then out again,' the e-mail says."

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