

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

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ACTION OFFICE: EDO

To: R. Rihm, OEDO  
Ref. G20100048  
Due: 2/11/10

AUTHOR: ~~Sen. Patrick Leahy~~  
Sen. Bernard Sanders + Rep. Welch  
AFFILIATION: CONG

ADDRESSEE: Gregory Jaczko

SUBJECT: Contamination on the grounds of the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant

ACTION: Signature of Chairman

DISTRIBUTION: OCA

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LETTER DATE: 01/15/2010

ACKNOWLEDGED No

SPECIAL HANDLING: Ref: Ltr-10-0024

NOTES:

FILE LOCATION: ADAMS

DATE DUE: 02/<sup>16</sup>/~~15~~/2010

DATE SIGNED:

January 15, 2010

The Honorable Gregory B. Jaczko  
Chairman  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Dear Chairman Jaczko:

We are writing in response to the alarming news that Entergy, owner of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant, may have misled state officials regarding the safety of the plant.

Elevated levels of radioactive tritium have recently been found in a groundwater monitoring well on the plant site and we understand from recent news reports that Entergy has confirmed that underground piping is among the possible sources of the contamination. According to various reports in the media, this comes after Entergy Vermont Yankee officials had told state investigators, on a number of occasions, that there was no underground piping carrying water that could contain radioactivity. This leak highlights our ongoing concerns about Entergy Vermont Yankee's commitment to safety and to being forthright with the public and state and federal regulatory and safety agencies.

We therefore request that you undertake an immediate and thorough investigation to determine if there was an attempt by Entergy Vermont Yankee to mislead state officials regarding the plant's safety and underground piping. Please also determine whether information provided by Entergy to the NRC has been accurate, complete, and consistent with that provided to the State of Vermont. We hope you can pinpoint exactly what Entergy knew about the extent of their underground piping and this leak, and when they knew it. We would also like to know whether and why state regulatory agencies were not made aware of the extent of underground piping and the risk it posed prior to this incident, and whether communications to the NRC have been complete and timely. Finally, we would like the NRC to continue to work with the plant to determine the cause of the leak and resolve the situation as quickly as possible to avoid any further release of radioactive materials.

Please continue to keep us thoroughly informed as more information becomes available. We are committed to assisting Vermont and the NRC to ensure that the Entergy Vermont Yankee plant meets its safety obligations. We appreciate your timely attention to this issue.

Sincerely,