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STATE OF VERMONT  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STATE HOUSE  
115 STATE STREET  
MONTPELIER, VT  
05633-5201

August 11, 2010

Dear Chairman Jaczko,

For the past 12 years, I have represented the town of Vernon, the host community to Vermont Yankee, in the Vermont legislature. I requested an opportunity to meet with you as part of your stakeholder meeting in Brattleboro on July 14 and was told by your staff such a meeting would not be possible, so I am writing this letter to share with you some of my concerns.

Over the years, before and after the plant was purchased by Entergy in 2002, I have worked closely with Vermont Yankee management on a number of issues. These range from representing Vernon in negotiating the plant's property tax rate--where we were definitely on opposite sides of the table--to supporting the plant in various issues affecting VY that have come up in the legislature.

I have had the opportunity to become very familiar with Vermont Yankee's financial structure, plant operations, decommissioning, emergency management, and virtually every facet of their operations. At times I have served as an ombudsman between the plant and people who live in the local towns, and I am personally acquainted with many of the people who work at Vermont Yankee and live in the legislative district I represent. I certainly regard myself as a stakeholder in the conversation surrounding the renewal of the plant's license for another 20 years.

Vermont Yankee is an industrial site where safe and reliable operations are the absolute foundation of everything they do every day. My personal experiences with employees at all levels and in all parts of the organization, both union and management, only serve to reinforce this view. The fact that VY consistently earns "all green" ratings from the NRC and was rated very highly by INPO a few months ago is further proof of this. Vermont Yankee also is one of only a handful of Vermont worksites that have earned the highest "Star" rating from Vermont Occupational Safety and Health Agency's Green Mountain Voluntary Protection Program, which promotes comprehensive safety and health management systems at companies throughout the state.

I understand that there are folks in Vermont and the surrounding states who view nuclear power much differently than I do, and over the years I have attended scores of public meetings held by the NRC and Vermont state regulatory agencies where the

views of people throughout the local communities, both pro and against, have been discussed at great length. I can attest from personal experience that the opponents to Vermont Yankee have always gotten a full opportunity to express their views, and those views have gotten ample coverage in the regional and statewide media. In fact, opponents to VY and nuclear power in general have probably gotten the lion's share of public exposure here in Vermont for their views.

This is why I am having a hard time understanding why you came to Brattleboro a few weeks ago to hold a highly-publicized NRC-sponsored "stakeholder" meeting and invited only anti-nuclear activists to speak, not allowing other points of view to be heard. There are many thoughtful and highly-respected Vermont stakeholders who could have provided balance and insight to the relicensing debate had they been invited to participate. I am disappointed this did not happen.

Instead, we got a biased, ill-informed 90-minute monologue by people who are avowed opponents of Vermont Yankee, some of whom, far from being "concerned citizens" are professionals, paid to advocate in the state legislature and other venues around Vermont for the immediate shut-down of Vermont Yankee. James Moore of the Vermont Public Interest Research Group is one, and Sandra Levine of the Conservation Law Foundation is certainly another. Raymond Shadis is a paid consultant to the New England Coalition, and lives 225 miles from Vermont Yankee in Edgecomb, Maine .

I listened to the phone broadcast of the meeting and I must tell you the exaggerations, distortions, unfounded allegations and outright falsehoods that were introduced into the public record and duly reported by the statewide media as a result of this meeting were absolutely astounding.

For example, one panel member made the statement that Vermont Yankee has cut corners on investing in plant maintenance and equipment upgrades. Yet it is true that Entergy has spent approximately 400 million dollars on upgrades to the plant since the 2002 purchase. The NRC's own relicensing teams, who since 2006 have spent more than 7,000 hours at VY investigating these very issues, have reported that the plant is in proper condition for a 20-year license renewal. And if the statement made by this anti-nuclear activist is true, why do NRC's on-going safety inspections of the plant continue to result in "all green" findings in all these categories?

Another individual made the statement implying that nothing meaningful is being done to remediate the tritium leak at Vermont Yankee when it has been publicly reported that more than 130,000 gallons of tritiated water have already been removed from the groundwater and will be cleaned up and put back into the plant. And these operations will continue until at least 300,000 gallons have been recovered. Entergy held a stakeholder meeting to announce that a comprehensive program is currently underway to make Vermont Yankee a leader in the industry-wide issue of preventing and remediating tritium leaks and this story received statewide media coverage. Yet this completely false allegation made during the NRC stakeholder meeting went unchallenged into the public domain. There are a number of other examples involving equipment reliability, emergency planning, alleged threats to public health and safety and several other issues that also went unchallenged.

By choosing to meet only with anti-nuclear activists, the NRC very likely conveyed to the public in Vermont an aura of legitimacy upon those who were chosen to speak. In fact, several folks claimed they were speaking on behalf the public, which certainly is an exaggeration.

The relicensing of Vermont Yankee, if VY is found by the NRC to be safely operated and structurally sound and capable of providing power to Vermont and New England for the next 20 years is of huge importance to the people who live in this region.

Vermont has one of the lowest per-capita carbon footprints in the nation. We have the lowest electric rates in New England. This would not be true without Vermont Yankee. Our state's economy relies on the availability of base load power to support our tiny but growing renewable energy sector. The President of the United States has come to the view that we cannot meet our global warming goals without nuclear power, and Vermont Yankee has a long record of safe operations. It is an excellent candidate to help meet these challenges.

We face some tough decisions as we determine what our electricity sources will be over the next 20 years. These decisions need to be made on the basis of the best facts and information that is available to us. Our energy future both in Vermont and the US depend on this. The stakes are too high not to demand a very high standard for veracity and objectivity in this discussion as we go forward.

I would be glad to discuss these concerns with you in more detail if that would be helpful. Also, I have attached a letter to the editor that was written by a former member of the Brattleboro Selectboard and printed in the Brattleboro Reformer.

Respectfully Yours,



Rep. Patricia O'Donnell  
House District Windham-1  
P.O. Box 355  
Vernon, Vermont 05354

cc: Hon. James Douglas, Governor  
Hon. Brian Dubie, Lt. Governor  
Hon. Patrick Leahy, US Senator  
Hon. Bernard Sanders, US Senator  
Hon. Peter Welch, US Congressman  
Commissioner Kristine L. Svinicki  
Commissioner George Apostolakis  
Commissioner William D. Magwood  
Commissioner William C. Ostendorff

# The after-effects of closing VY

Editor of the *Reformer*:

There has been a spate of letters from people wishing to shut down Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. On top of that, this being an election year, candidates are falling all over themselves trying to jump on the anti-nuke bandwagon. I would like to address a few issues.

There are a few geniuses who have suggested Brattleboro take over Yankee by eminent domain. That's great, but first we'll have to take over Vernon by eminent domain. If folks are so concerned about the plant they should at least know where it is located.

If Yankee were to shut down operations today, the spent fuel will remain on site, and this is the most dangerous material.

Then there's the cost of electric power. All of the alternative energy sources will some day be able to supplant nuclear and the much more costly oil and the extremely more unhealthy coal which, by the way, accounts for over half of the country's electricity. Until then, nuclear remains the cheapest and safest of these alternatives.

The cost to our community will be astronomical. Yankee pays lots of tax dollars to the town and state. Furthermore, their generosity is responsible for the continued viability of many of our non-profits. VY's employees are among the highest paid in our community, and they shop at and support our local businesses. The impact of the loss of those monies runs into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Some have suggested we train employees of VY for other jobs before the plant closes. I would like to inquire as to where are the nearly 1,000 jobs that pay over \$100,000 per annum for which we can train them? Such jobs are available, but not in our area. They are in other nuclear plants far away from Brattleboro. The result is that \$100,000,000 in salaries will be lost to this community and the hundreds of millions of dollars they generate will also be gone.

But we'll still have all that spent fuel lying around.

I cannot understand why the editors of the *Reformer* seem to be hell bent for leather to shut the plant down. When the plant closes and all of those monies no longer flow into our community, one of the first businesses to go will most assuredly be the newspaper.

Finally, I'd like to address the activists, many of who have moved here specifically to close down the plant. I have the distinct feeling that once the decision is made on the relicensing of the plant, they will leave the area in droves, no matter what the outcome, leaving the town to the trustafarians who don't have to worry about affordability and the rest of us poor saps who do.

I would hope that our candidates and representatives will take all of these things into consideration instead of falling all over themselves to shut down a critical part of our local economy.

**Bob Fagelson,**  
Brattleboro, July 27