

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
BEFORE THE ATOMIC SAFETY AND LICENSING BOARD

In the Matter of

Docket # 50-293-LR

Entergy Corporation

Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station

License Renewal Application

June 23, 2011

Pilgrim Watch Memorandum –Submerged Cables

The Region I Administrator, William Dean, was quoted today in the press saying that, “submerged cables at nuclear plants (are) something that needs to be addressed.” The news article reads, with pertinent paragraphs highlighted for the board’s convenience,

NRC says VY has operated safely

By JOSH STILTS / Reformer Staff

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http://www.reformer.com/localnews/ci_18334719

Thursday June 23, 2011

BRATTLEBORO - Just hours before the federal court was set to hear Entergy's lawsuit against the State of Vermont, members of Nuclear Regulatory Commission presented their yearly findings of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant.

Regional Administrator for the NRC, Bill Dean, met with members of the press before Wednesday's annual assessment meeting and said that from a safety stand point, Vermont Yankee is doing well.

"Particularly with all of the distractions, all of the doubts as to whether they're going to continue to operate, the plant has safely operated," Dean said.

Dean said that he hasn't seen any attrition and that staffing levels at the plant are good, that personnel are making good decisions and taking appropriate steps to complete corrective action.

There were eight green low-safety significant findings at the plant during 2010, according to the presentation.

Members of the audience were polarized on the issue how safely the Vermont Yankee plant is operated.

More than 200 people attended the meeting as members of the NRC and employees from Vermont Yankee tried to explain what measures have been taken at the plant to ensure that the disaster that happened in Japan isn't duplicated.

"Nuclear power plants in this country are safe to operate in light of what happened at Fukushima," Dean said.

"We're probably not going to get all the information for some time," he said.

Whatever happens to plant whether it continues to operate, is decommissioned or is held in stasis, the NRC is going to ensure that the plant either operates safely or is decommissioned safely, Dean said.

Technical consultant for the New England Coalition, Ray Shadis, urged members of the NRC staff to reexamine the mitigation of submerged electrical cables at the plant.

"NRC's job is safety, it's not about whether I like the color of the plant," he said. "NRC seems to comfort itself in public documents that we're not going to have an earthquake and a tsunami here."

Dean agreed that submerged cables at nuclear plants something that needs to be addressed.

Earlier this week, Shadis expressed his desire for civility during the hearing and trial which begins today. Dean said he appreciated what Shadis was saying.

Last week Sen. Bernie Sanders I-Vt., said that he was informed that members of the NRC had met with the United States Department of Justice about intervening in Entergy's lawsuit against Vermont and Jared Cobb called for the NRC to stay out of the lawsuit the crowd applauded.

Dean told the media before the meeting that he had no knowledge of a NRC vote on whether it should side with Entergy in its lawsuit against Vermont.

"I'm not aware of anything that has been done relative to the NRC to inject itself into the court hearing," he said. "Our Chairman (Gregory Jaczko) has repeatedly stated that the NRC will not intervene."

There are certain rules and responsibilities, such as environmental and economic concerns that fall within the state's ability to regulate a plant, he said.

He also said that nuclear plants can operate in a "post-down mode" lowering the power output levels.

"They could shut down now and re-fuel next year," Dean said. "There are plenty of experiences in the past, Crystal River nuclear power plant in Florida, for example, they've been shut down for several years and were able to restart safely."

He added that if Entergy decided to purchase refueling materials to possibly be installed this fall and the court decided to not allow the plant to operate past March 2012, the fuel could be sold to another plant. (Emphasis added)

Conclusion

We respectfully ask that this be included in the record as it serves to support Pilgrim Watch's Requests for Hearings filed on December 10, 2010 and January 20, 2011.

Respectfully signed,

Mary lampert

(Signed Electronically)

Pilgrim Watch, pro se
148 Washington Street
Duxbury, MA 02332
Tel. 781-934-0389
Email: mary.lampert@comcast.net