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From: Chris Campany [mailto:ccampany@windhamregional.org]
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To: RulemakingComments Resource <RulemakingComments.Resource@nrc.gov>
Subject: [External_Sender] Comments on Docket No. NRC-2015-0070

Please find attached comments of the Windham Regional Commission on **Docket No. NRC-2015-0070.**

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March 18, 2016

Secretary
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001
Attn: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff

SUBJECT: **Docket No. NRC-2015-0070** Regulatory Improvements for Decommissioning Power Reactors, Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking Request for Comment

Comments of the Windham Regional Commission

Background

The Windham Regional Commission (WRC) is writing to comment on the Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) concerning Regulatory Improvements for Decommissioning Power Reactors. WRC is the regional planning commission that serves 27 towns in southeastern Vermont, including the 23 towns of Windham County, Readsboro, Searsburg and Winhall in Bennington County, and Weston in Windsor County. The Windham Region is the host region of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station.

The operation of Vermont Yankee and nuclear power has been a contentious issue in our region. However, the WRC maintained a neutral position as to whether or not Vermont Yankee should continue operation, as well as the merits of nuclear power, in order to facilitate conversations among all sides of the issue. Therefore, our perspective on decommissioning comes from a position of having been neither pro- or anti-Vermont Yankee nor pro- or anti-nuclear power. Through our participation in numerous Vermont Public Service Board dockets related to Vermont Yankee, however, we have developed well-informed positions on decommissioning, spent fuel management, site restoration standards, and responsibility for decommissioning costs that we feel are in the best interests of the host region. These positions are included in the Windham Regional Plan, the most recent update of which took effect in November, 2014 (the full text is available at http://windhamregional.org/publications).

General Comments

Efficient Decommissioning Process

We appreciate the goal of amending the existing regulations to create an efficient decommissioning process that would reduce the need for exemptions from existing regulations, and support the principles of good regulation including openness, clarity, and reliability. The current process of requiring non-operating licensees to petition for license amendments or exemptions as if they were operating plants creates an unnecessarily complex and inefficient process that works for no one. However, when it comes to the overall goals of this rulemaking, it is important to us as a host region that decommissioning regulations be holistic. Decommissioning is not just about the relationship of the industry to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. It is ultimately about the public health, safety and welfare of the community that hosts the plant and its employees as well. If the NRC is to preempt local and state decision making related to radiological decommissioning, responsibility for the outcomes created by decommissioning regulations falls to the NRC. Among those outcomes is the relationship of radiological decommissioning to the orderly development of the host community and the well-being of that community after a plant ceases operation. To quote Peter Drucker, "Efficiency is doing things right; effectiveness is doing the right things." This rulemaking should focus first on doing the right things and then on how to do the right things right.

Cradle to Grave Approach

While recognizing that the final disposition of waste is beyond the scope of this rulemaking, this is nonetheless an opportunity to develop a comprehensive and rational approach to regulation across the full life cycle of nuclear power plants. As is evidenced by the existence of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission itself, nuclear power is different given the fundamental nature of its fuel and waste. It would seem to be in the best interests of the nation, host communities, the industry and the future of nuclear power to use this rulemaking as an opportunity to identify a "cradle to grave" approach to planning for the eventual closure and prompt decommissioning of each plant that is currently operating, those which have closed and are awaiting decommissioning, and those which will be licensed in the future. In the era of merchant plants, which do not have the ability to tap into ratepayers for decommissioning costs, eliminating the SAFSTOR option and making prompt decommissioning the default goal would result in more accurate and reliable decommissioning plans, decommissioning cost analyses, and the required level of ongoing contribution of plant operators and/or corporate parents (if any) to those trusts. Elimination of the SAFSTOR option would also provide greater predictability and security for plant workers who are foundational to efficient and safe plant operation, and better position states and local governments to plan for orderly development while a plant is operating and after the cessation of its operation.

Proactive and Substantive Inclusion of Host Communities

What constitutes an efficient decommissioning process may be relative to the beneficiaries of that process. The NRC will have its perspective as a regulator. Individual plants and the industry as a whole will have the perspective of a regulated industry. Host communities are currently given almost negligible attention in the decommissioning process: two public meetings; one after a post-shutdown decommissioning activities report is submitted and another when the license termination plan is received.[1] The NRC also provides the opportunity for the public to observe meetings with the licensee, but observation is not participation. From the perspective of the regulator and the plant operator this may appear to be a highly efficient public engagement process. From our perspective as a host region this is not real, effective or meaningful engagement at all. What must not be lost in this rulemaking process is the perspective of host communities about what the new regulatory regime *and its outcomes* mean for them. It may come as a surprise that many if not the vast majority of host communities have not given much thought to what happens when their nuclear plant closes, much less the regulations that govern the closure and the decommissioning of that plant, until the day it is announced that the plant will close. We strongly urge the NRC to secure the resources to convene host communities to:

1. Document the host community experience of past decommissionings including economic, fiscal, employment, and environmental impacts, all of which are to be assessed by the NRC in its development of decommissioning Environmental Impact Statements;
2. Develop an understanding of what closure and decommissioning policy outcomes are for host communities of merchant plants relative to public utility-owned plants;
3. Assess host community costs, benefits and risks of deferred radiological and non-radiological decommissioning and site restoration versus prompt decommissioning and related local government policy concerns; and
4. Form a Host Community Decommissioning Policy Task Force to provide local government insight to the NRC in its rulemaking.

We encourage the NRC to support the National Organization of Development Organizations or similar organization to aid the Commission in this effort. A working definition of host communities could be those included within the 10-mile emergency planning zone.

Specific Considerations

[1] http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/fact-sheets/decommissioning.html

Emergency Preparedness Requirements

We believe a tiered approach to emergency preparedness that acknowledges the risks that a nuclear power plant poses to public health and safety should be adopted, and that hostile action-based scenarios should be included among the criteria that inform the proper level of preparedness. This is in the interest of the residents of the emergency planning zone and national security. As long as fuel remains in the pool there remains an elevated risk to public health and safety and a need for off-site response readiness and capability. This is particularly true in rural areas where training and equipment unique to an industrial and radiological emergency might otherwise not be a concern. To this end, until all fuel is removed from the pool:

- The 10-mile Emergency Planning Zone and Emergency Response Data System should remain in place and operational;
- Environmental surveillance for radiological and non-radiological materials should continue; and
- Licensees must maintain a scaled-back emergency response organization outside of the Control Room setting to allow for on-scene command and control of resources, especially provided from offsite.

Changes to the Current Approach for Decommissioning Power Reactor Licensees

Through participation as a party in dockets related to Vermont Yankee before the Vermont Public Service Board, the WRC has for several years explored the issues surrounding the eventual cessation of operations at the station, whenever and for whatever reason that might occur. Our filings and other work related to the WRC's work on Vermont Yankee can be found on our website at http://windhamregional.org/vermont-yankee. This work has informed our position on national decommissioning policy, especially as the nation transitions from the era of public utility owned and operated plants to the era of merchant plants.

As a host region, we advocate for decommissioning policy that not only ensures complete and effective radiological and non-radiological decommissioning of the site, but that which also mitigates the economic, fiscal, employment, cultural and social impacts of the plant's closure on the host community, and which leads to site restoration as soon as possible so that it may be reused. This is particularly important for rural communities where plant closures are likely to have significant intersecting impacts.

With the exception of sites where more than one reactor is in continued operation, it is our position that SAFSTOR should not be an option. In all cases prompt decommissioning should be the goal as that approach:

- Provides greater certainty, both technically and financially.
- Provides a better economic and workforce profile and is necessary for the orderly development of the host community.
- Provides access to a workforce with critical legacy knowledge because no one knows the plant better than those who work there at present.
- Is less expensive.
- Produces less radiological waste, or an equal volume of waste, and there is greater assurance of the availability of appropriate waste disposal and transportation infrastructure.
- Reduces regulatory costs.

These outcomes are in the fundamental best interests of host communities and the nation.

Prompt decommissioning provides many benefits including a softer economic transition for host community and "jobshed" of the plant. In a SAFSTOR scenario the local workforce shrinks rapidly, and within about five years the remaining workforce drops to a few dozen or less full time equivalents and remains at that level until the beginning of delayed decommissioning, at which time employment jumps dramatically but for just a few years. Prompt decommissioning on the other hand, maintains a larger workforce for a longer period of time, and avoids the employment shock (and housing surplus shock) that occurs at the end of a SAFSTOR period, especially for host communities that are rural in nature. Prompt decommissioning returns some of the land to productive use more rapidly, and will return all of the land to productive use once the remaining spent fuel has been removed. Prompt decommissioning also allows for the use of existing plant workers to assist with the dismantling of structures, which provides critical legacy knowledge that can add efficiency. And, prompt decommissioning provides greater certainty and less risk, both technically and financially. Finally, prompt decommissioning releases the site from regulatory control sooner than SAFSTOR, which increases regulatory efficiency and avoids the costs of having government and non-government organizations tied up in expensive oversight and litigation.

In our research we found that prompt decommissioning was the choice of public utility-owned plants except for the aforementioned circumstance where multiple reactors were in operation at the site. SAFSTOR appears primarily to be a palliative to address insufficient decommissioning trusts when merchant plants cease operations. We appreciate the argument

that SAFSTOR allows for further decay and would decrease worker exposure. However, that would seem to indicate that those plants that were promptly decommissioned in the past exposed workers to harm and we trust the NRC and plant owners would not have allowed that to be the case. We also appreciate the fact that public utilities were able to pass along decommissioning and site restoration costs to ratepayers, an option unavailable to merchant plant operators that cease operations. The solution to the insufficiency of decommissioning trusts would be greater contributions of funds to the trusts while plants are operating, and, in some cases, not deferring tasks such as spent fuel transfer campaigns (other than fuel that must be cooled), to the post-operation period. Furthermore, it is our position that where parent companies exist, the operating company and parent company should be held jointly and severally responsible for radiological and non-radiological decommissioning and the costs thereof.

Insufficiency of the Post Shutdown Decommissioning Activity Report (PSDAR) and Poorly-Defined Role of the NRC in PSDAR Review

It is our experience that the PSDAR insufficiently characterizes the site conditions and true costs of decommissioning and site restoration. This is based upon our understanding of what was presented in the Vermont Yankee PSDAR relative to what was presented by the petitioner and witnesses in Vermont Public Service Board dockets. In the absence of any required approval of the PSDAR by the NRC as a regulating agency, however, it is difficult to understand what real effect review by the Commission has and what ability or authority the Commission has to require sufficient, accurate and reliable information from the licensee. Furthermore, it is unclear what, if any, impact comments from stakeholders, including state and local government, does and can have in the NRC's PSDAR review process. The NRC should have PSDAR approval authority and it must be required to consider comments from state and local government, as well as the public and other stakeholders, in making its approval or denial decision. Furthermore, the NRC should conduct regular reviews and assessments of PSDARs to determine the accuracy and sufficiency of the information provided as it relates to site conditions and progress made towards post-shutdown actions, and it should have the authority to require updates to the PSDAR to reflect changes required as a result of the reviews and assessments. These updates should be conducted in tandem with reviews of decommissioning trusts.

Insufficiency of the Generic Environmental Impact Statement

We do not believe the use of generic environmental impact statements satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, nor do we feel they are particularly

useful in accurately informing the public or the NRC about the specific details of plant decommissioning.

We will focus here on the insufficiency of the socioeconomic and environmental justice impact assessments and conclusions based upon our own experience with NUREG-1437, Supplement 30 Vol. 1.[2] We hope this detailed information from a host region will help explain to both the NRC and other host communities what is at stake in this rulemaking when it comes to the socioeconomic, fiscal, and cultural impacts of the closure of a nuclear power plant, especially those in rural areas.

Section 5.1.12 Socioeconomics of the Vermont Yankee PSDAR states:

> Decommissioning of VYNPS is expected to result in negative socioeconomic impacts. As VYNPS transitions from an operating plant to a shutdown plant and into the different phases of decommissioning, an overall decrease in plant staff will occur. The lost wages of these plant staff will result in decreases in revenues available to support the local economy and local tax authorities. Some laid-off workers may relocate, thus potentially impacting the local cost of housing and availability of public services.
>
> Section 4.3.12 of the GEIS evaluated changes in workforce and population, changes in local tax revenues, and changes in public services. The evaluation also examined large plants located in rural areas that permanently shut down early and selected the SAFSTOR option. The GEIS determined that this situation is the likeliest to have negative impacts. The GEIS concluded that socioeconomic impacts are neither detectable nor destabilizing and that mitigation measures are not warranted. Therefore, ENVY concludes that the impacts of VYNPS decommissioning on socioeconomic impacts are bounded by the GEIS (p. 29).

Section 5.1.13 Environmental Justice of the PSDAR "concludes that the impacts of VYNPS decommissioning on environmental justice are small and are bounded by the GEIS (p.30)." In our comments on the PSDAR we disputed the small impact findings of the GEIS related to both socioeconomic impacts and environmental justice impact.

When fully operational, Vermont Yankee had over 600 workers, most living in Windham County, VT; Cheshire County, NH; and Franklin County, MA. For over 40 years, Vermont Yankee has been an important component of this region's economy. Four regional economic development planning organizations sought to understand the magnitude of economic impact to our tri-state region due to the discontinuing of operations and decommissioning of Vermont

[2] http://windhamregional.org/images/docs/vy/Generic_EIS_Supplement_30_VY_Volume_1.pdf

Yankee, especially the loss of local income. The four organizations are: the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, the Southwest Regional Planning Commission, and the Windham Regional Commission. Through a state District Local Technical Assistance grant, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments retained the services of the UMass Donahue Institute to conduct a study that illustrates the anticipated direct, indirect and induced economic impacts to the local tri-county area (Cheshire, Franklin and Windham Counties), and assesses the ramifications on the long-term economic prospects of the region.[3] Some of the findings are rather stark.

- The loss of total output (i.e. direct, indirect & induced) from when VY was operational to the year 2021 is a difference of $487 million. This represents the loss of the total value of wages and the total loss of goods and services produced, related to VY operations. This is an important figure for understanding the broader implications of this event to the economic climate of the region.
- The two key data points that hold the greatest consequence from this event for our region are: the total loss of employment (approx. 1,200 jobs) and the total amount of indirect and induced output ($90 million). This $90 million in output represents the annual loss of economic activity to the tri-county business community, in comparison to when VY was operational.
- The purpose of conducting this study was to offer an understanding of the order of magnitude for how this event will impact the tri-county area economy. These findings underline the importance and urgency for why our region must take steps to improve our economy and discover opportunities for collaboration to mitigate the losses anticipated as a result of VY closure.
- The industry sectors anticipated to have the greatest impact (aside from Utilities, of course) is the Leisure & Hospitality sector and Other Services sector (255 jobs anticipated to be lost). These sectors often provide among the lowest wages. As a result, workers with the least amount of resources may be the most negatively impacted.
- The pending economic impacts due to VY's closure in the Windham Region of VT, Cheshire County, NH, and Franklin County, MA are significant. The comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) developed for each of these has noted the relative stagnation of the area's economy and workforce challenges even before the closure of VY. The closure of VY will exacerbate existing trends.

An economic impact study commissioned by Vermont Yankee itself, "The Economic Impact of the VY Station on Windham County and Vermont"[4] prepared by Richard W. Heaps in July, 2012, states the following:

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[3] http://windhamregional.org/images/docs/vy/UMDI_Economic_Impacts_VY_Closure_Dec2014.pdf
[4] http://windhamregional.org/images/docs/vy/Exhibit_EN-RWH-3_Heaps_Report.pdf

> The importance of the VY Station in the county's economy is demonstrated by the fact this one firm directly accounts for about 2% of the employment and about 5% of the compensation earned in Windham County. The VY Station's compensation per employee is higher than that of any industry in Windham County. In addition, the Vermont Department of Labor reports that the VY Station is one of the top five employers in Windham County.
>
> It is clear that economic activity in Windham County has significantly lagged that of the rest of Vermont. In addition, even as Vermont is a slow growing state from a demographic perspective, Windham County is even a slower growing area. This suggests that any major, negative economic impacts could be felt more acutely in Windham County than elsewhere in Vermont (p. 2).

It seems incongruous that the licensee can argue before the Vermont Public Service Board that the loss of economic activity due the closure of the plant will be significant in Windham County, yet claim in the PSDAR that the impacts are bounded by previous environmental impact statements which conclude employment and environmental justice impacts will be small.

In NUREG-1437, Supplement 30 Vol. 1, under the No-Action Scenario in which Vermont Yankee's operating license would not be renewed and Entergy would cease operations, NRC staff concluded the following about the socioeconomics of the plant closure:

> In Chapter 4, the NRC staff concluded that the socioeconomic impact of continued plant operation would be SMALL. There would be immediate socioeconomic impacts associated with the shutdown of the plant because of the reduction in the staff at the plant. There may also be an immediate reduction in property tax revenues for Windham County, and this is anticipated to be LARGE. The overall impact would depend on the state of the economy, the net change in workforce at the plant, and the changes in local government tax receipts. Appendix J of Supplement 1 to NUREG-0586 (NRC 2002) shows that the overall socioeconomic impact of plant closure plus decommissioning could be greater than SMALL. The NRC staff concludes that the socioeconomic impact of VYNPS shutdown on employment would be SMALL because of the relatively small employment loss compared with total employment in the economy of the surrounding area. Therefore, the NRC staff concludes that the socioeconomic impacts of plant shutdown would range from SMALL to LARGE. Impacts could be offset if new power-generating facilities are built at or near the current site (p. 8-5).

While we agree that the property tax revenue impact is, in fact, large (see the Resiliency Action Plan prepared for the Town of Vernon),[5] we disagree that the impact on employment will be small. More to the point, the EIS fails to take into account the disproportionate contribution the plant makes to total local income and how this translates into loss of employment and indirect and induced input. The conclusions of both the UMDI and Heaps studies make clear that the loss of income associated with Vermont Yankee employees will have significant reverberations throughout the local economy.

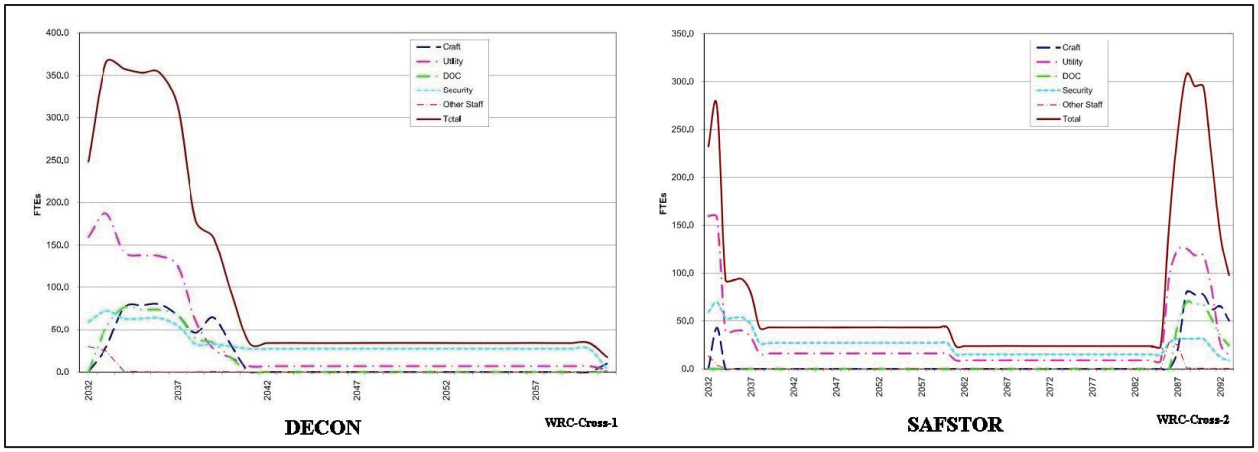
We also dispute the finding that the environmental justice impact of the plant closure will be small. In the generic EIS, the NRC states:

> In Chapter 4, the NRC staff concluded that the environmental justice impact of continued operation of the plant would be SMALL. Continued operation of the plant would not have a disproportionately high and adverse impact on minority and low-income populations. Shutdown of the plant also would not have disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations resulting from the loss of employment opportunities at the site or from secondary socioeconomic impacts (e.g., loss of patronage at local businesses because the loss would be very minor in the context of the regional economy). The NRC staff concludes that the environmental justice impact of plant shutdown is expected to be SMALL. Any impact would be offset if new power-generating facilities are built at or near the current site. See Appendix J to NUREG-0586, Supplement 1 (NRC 2002), for additional discussion of this impact (p. 8-6).

The UMDI study found the loss of employment opportunities from secondary economic impacts will be substantial, and will most significantly impact service and low-wage earners. We believe the environmental justice impacts will be significant.

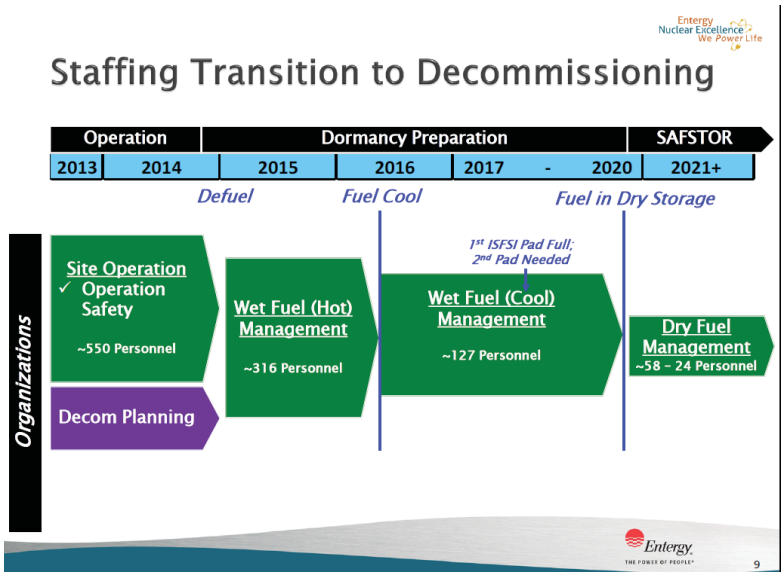
We believe the NRC is obligated to compare the socioeconomic and environmental justice impacts under both DECON and SAFSTOR scenarios. There is a fundamental difference in employment impacts under DECON versus SAFSTOR scenarios. The graphs below were prepared by Entergy for use in Vermont Public Service Docket 7862 and demonstrate the acute drop in employment under the SAFSTOR scenario versus DECON.

[5] http://windhamregional.org/images/docs/publications/vernon_post-vy_report.pdf



[6]

Entergy anticipated that when the station shuts down the workforce will shrink from roughly 620 to about 250 over a 9-12 month period. With SAFSTOR, after a brief ramp up to button up the plant, the workforce would quickly drop further to about 50 people.



In Section 2.2.8 Changes to Management and Staffing of the PSDAR, Entergy states staffing levels will be adjusted to reflect the ongoing transition of the site organization (p. 18). The graphic above titled "Staffing Transition to Decommissioning" was included in a presentation made by Entergy to the VT Nuclear Decommissioning Citizens Advisory Panel on September 25,

[6] Vermont Public Service BoardDocket 7862 WRC-Cross-1 and WRC-Cross-2 are discovery responses provided by Entergy VY that describe employment levels. The DECON graphic is of scenario 3, and assumes the Station shuts down in 2032 with fuel removed by 2060. The SAFSTOR graphic is of scenario 5, and assumes the Station shuts down in 2032 with spent fuel removed by 2060, and the site restored by 2092 - 60 years after shutdown. (Documents available at http://windhamregional.org/images/docs/vy/exhibits/wrc-cross-1.pdf and http://windhamregional.org/images/docs/vy/exhibits/wrc-cross-2.pdf.)

2014.[7] It shows the anticipated change in employment under transition of the plant to SAFSTOR conditions. This employment information was used in the UMDI study.

The more gradual falloff of economic activity associated with DECON offers the region social, economic and fiscal benefits that SAFSTOR does not. We believe it is the responsibility of the NRC to assess the socioeconomic and environmental justice impacts under both DECON and SAFSTOR scenarios to fully characterize the impacts of the choice by the licensee to pursue the SAFSTOR option. More to the point, we believe this data underscores the harm to the host community caused by the availability of the SAFSTOR option, and that it supports our argument that prompt decommissioning should be the goal of this rulemaking.

Decommissioning Trust Funds

Decommissioning trust funds (DTF) should only be used for radiological decommissioning and, if sufficient funds remain available following that, subsequent site restoration. Draining the fund for non-radiological expenses delays decommissioning, which in turn delays restoration and reuse of the site. The rules should clearly define the appropriate – and inappropriate – uses of the fund.

Furthermore, the NRC should seek input from stakeholders, including state and local governments, on the sufficiency and accuracy of decommissioning cost analyses in the interest of providing local input into the assumptions contained therein. To inform this process the NRC should require a full characterization (radiological and non-radiological) of the site at the time of closure so that the licensee can make a more accurate estimate of the costs of decommissioning and site restoration, and the public can be better informed about the sufficiency of the decommissioning cost analysis and related sufficiency of the decommissioning trust analysis.

There should be transparency in how the funds are used. Therefore, the licensee should be required to provide thirty-day notice before funds are withdrawn and provide a full accounting of the purpose of the expenditures. It should be mandatory that citizen advisory panels, or similar entities, be provided with thirty-day withdrawal notices.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. Please contact me should you have any questions.

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7 http://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/general/NDCAP%20September%2025th%202014%20Presentation%20-%20Final.pdf

Public Engagement in Decommissioning

The Vermont Nuclear Citizens Advisory Panel was created through a settlement agreement arrived at between the State of Vermont and Entergy Vermont Yankee. It has played an essential role in providing a forum for public engagement in the decommissioning of the Vermont Yankee plant. The panel has allowed for the dissemination of information from all parties involved; allowed the public to express its views and concerns; provided a forum for open and transparent discussion; and has established a working relationship between parties who might not otherwise have worked together. However, it is imperfect. The panel was created to advise the governor, the state legislature and state agencies, but its voting membership includes those it was created to advise. It also has no dedicated funding stream to support its operation. That being said, it remains nonetheless a good venue for public engagement as well as a means through which the public, stakeholder governments and agencies, and the licensee can communicate with one another and work towards areas of common agreement – or agreements to disagree – in an open forum. The imperfections noted above can be worked out as the panel continues to evolve.

We do suggest that community advisory panels be formed by all communities that host a nuclear power plant, and suggest the formation of such while the plant is still operating and ideally long before a licensee ever announces the intent to cease plant operations. However, we suggest public engagement panels not be mandated by the NRC since such panels would be formed by the licensee. Our experience has demonstrated the value of having a panel that certainly includes licensee representatives, but which operates independent of the licensee. The NRC should instead recommend that advisory panels be organized by the states, using past and present state panels as models, but that the panels function independent of state government. State and local interests often converge, but there must be room for open discussion and divergence.

The licensee should be required to have one or more representatives on the advisory panel and provide the financial resources necessary for the panel to run effectively. This rulemaking should consider establishing standards that would form the minimum basis for advisory panel funding.

A community advisory panel should supplement, not take the place of, the NRC's obligation to seek public comment or engage with the public through meetings, hearings or other means. However, this rulemaking should explore the value of NRC coordination or collaboration with such panels to facilitate the Commission's own public engagement. The goal is not to interfere with the independence of the NRC and its public input responsibilities, but rather to explore

opportunities for more meaningful and effective engagement between the public and the NRC in circumstances that experience has shown can be quite contentious.

We are glad to see this rulemaking underway and appreciate the issuance of this ANPR and the opportunity to provide comment. The WRC has developed perspectives that are informed by experience. As we note in our comments, not every host community or region has benefitted from the same level of engagement in the issues that we have as a result of our participation in state regulatory processes. We cannot understate our position that the NRC has the professional and moral obligation to proactively and substantively engage with host communities in this rulemaking, and we urge the Commission to engage with host communities as we have suggested. Simply providing opportunity for comment is insufficient given what these communities have at stake, especially those in rural areas that may be substantially dependent upon nuclear power plants both economically and fiscally. These communities and states also have the most at stake should the deferred decommissioning, or SAFSTOR, experiment in the era of merchant plants fail and the public is left to complete decommissioning and site restoration due to the insufficiency of decommissioning trusts and/or the insolvency of the licensee due to unforeseen circumstances decades after a plant has ceased operation. It is the NRC's responsibility to engage host communities in the conversation about the merits of SAFSTOR versus prompt decommissioning as a matter of national nuclear power policy.

Sincerely,

Chris Campany, AICP
Executive Director