

Docket No. 50-029
and 50-271

JUL 23 1986

Mr. A. Giordano, President
Mass Alert
52 Grinnell Street
Greenfield, MA 01301

Dear Mr. Giordano:

Your letter of June 17, 1986 to Commissioner Asselstine concerning the operation of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Station and the Yankee Nuclear Power Station has been referred to me for response. In your letter you requested an immediate public hearing within the next 30 days on the operation of these two facilities.

You stated that serious questions have been raised about the Vermont Yankee plant and its management competency. The NRC in its Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) Program, Report No. 50-271/85-99, dated March 21, 1986, evaluated the Vermont Yankee management in nine functional areas. The facility performance was rated category 1 (highest) in five areas and category 2 in the remaining four areas. In a review of SALP reports going back to May 1983, the management retained this high level of performance. With regard to your concern about the plant design, the Vermont Yankee plant recently resumed operation following an outage to implement plant upgrades including replacement of recirculation piping. The licensee's activities were closely followed by the NRC staff; no unacceptable situations were identified.

With respect to the Yankee Nuclear Power Station, you expressed a concern regarding the adequacy of the containment structure. The structure was designed to prevent the release of radioactivity to the atmosphere in the event of an accident. A vapor container leakage monitoring system is provided for continuously checking the integrity of the vapor container for leakage. Periodic leak tests at elevated pressure are also performed.

NRC regulations regarding containment structures are included in Appendix A to Part 50 of Title 10, "Energy," entitled "General Design Criteria for Nuclear Power Plants." In particular, the criteria state that a containment structure shall be provided to establish an essentially leaktight barrier against the uncontrolled release of radioactivity to the environment and that the structure shall be able to accommodate the calculated conditions resulting from any loss-of-coolant accident.

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P PDR

Mr. Giordano

-2-

The Systematic Evaluation Program (SEP) is an NRC initiated program to review the designs of older operating nuclear power plants to reconfirm and document their safety. One of the issues considered in this program was adequacy of the containment for postulated post-accident conditions. Independent analyses were performed by staff contractors. The peak pressure, using present-day conservative analysis criteria, was only slightly higher than the initial design pressure. A structural integrity test of the vapor container has been conducted at a pressure of 40 pounds per square inch gauge, which is 25% higher than the initial design pressure. This test pressure exceeds the peak calculated accident pressure. As part of SEP, the margins of safety for older structural design codes were also confirmed. Further, NRC experience with steel containments is that there is substantial margin to failure or leakage beyond the design pressure. The staff concluded that the vapor container provides an isolation barrier comparable to current criteria for Yankee and it is, therefore, acceptable for continued operation.

I have also considered your request for a public meeting in the area. Several meetings open for public participation have already been conducted in the vicinity of the plants, most recently the June 12, 1986 meeting on the Yankee Emergency Exercise in Rowe and the Vermont State Nuclear Advisory Panel (VSNAP) meeting, concerning resumption of operation of Vermont Yankee, on June 17, 1986 in Brattleboro, VT. At this time, no new issues have been identified which would warrant the commitment of NRC staff resources to support a further meeting.

As you know, the licensing proceedings for both the Yankee and Vermont Yankee plants are part of the public record and are available to anyone for review in the local public document rooms.

I appreciate your concern in this matter and hope that your questions have been answered.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by
H. R. Denton

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

*SEE PREVIOUS CONCURRENCE

Office:	PM/PAD #1	PD/PAD #1	BWD2	BWD2	OGC	DD/PWR-A
Surname:	*EMcKenna/tg	*GLear	*V Rooney	*DMuller	*RBachmann	*TNovak
Date:	07/09/86	07/10/86	07/10/86	07/10/86	07/11/86	07/17/86
Office:	D/PWR-A	BWDO	DDO	NRRO		
Surname:	HThompson	RBernero	RVoimer	HDenton		
Date:	07/17/86	07/18/86	07/22/86	07/22/86		

Mr. Giordano

-2-

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Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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Date:	07/09/86	07/10/86	07/10/86	07/10/87	07/11 /86	07/17/86	07/17/86

Office:	BWDO <i>RB</i>	DD	NRRO
Surname:	RBernero	RVollmer	HDenton
Date:	07/18/86	07/ /86	07/ /86

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Harold R. Denton, Supervisor
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
As Stated

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Surname: *EMcKenna/tg	*GLear	*VRooney	*DMuller	*RBachmann	TNovak
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Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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DD/PWR-A
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7/17/86

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As you know, the licensing proceedings for both the Yankee and Vermont Yankee plants are part of the public record and are available to anyone for review in the local public document rooms.

In summary, I conclude that you have not set forth any substantive issue or condition that would warrant a public hearing or meeting. I appreciate your concern in this matter and hope that your questions have been answered.

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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Office:	PM/PAD#1	PD/PAD#1	BWD2	BWD2	AD/PWR-A
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Office:	BWDO	DD	NRRO
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Date:	07/ /86	07/ /86	07/ /86

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PAD#1 r/f



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

ACTION

EDO PRINCIPAL CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL

FROM:

AL GIORDANO
MASSACHUSETTS ALERT

DUE: 07/14/86

EDO CONTROL: 001885
DOC DT: 06/17/86
FINAL REPLY:

TO:

COMM. ASSELSTINE

FOR SIGNATURE OF:

** GREEN **

SECY NO: 86-649

CUNNINGHAM *Denton*

DESC:

ROUTING:

REQUEST HEARING ON OPERATION OF VERMONT YANKEE

DENTON
MURLEY

DATE: 06/26/86

ASSIGNED TO: ~~ELB~~

CONTACT: CUNNINGHAM *Denton*

NRR 7/1/86

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

NRR RECEIVED: 07/02/86

ACTION: DPLB - MIRABLIA

NRR ROUTING: DENTON/VOLLMER
PPAS
MOSSBURG/TOMS

Bernero Muller

866012

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

PAPER NUMBER: CRC-86-0949 LOGGING DATE: Jun 25 86

ACTION OFFICE: EDO

AUTHOR: A. Giordano
AFFILIATION: MA (MASSACHUSETTS)

LETTER DATE: Jun 17 86 FILE CODE: ID&R-5 Vermont Yankee

SUBJECT: Req public hearing on the oper of the Vermont
Yankee nuc sta

ACTION: Appropriate

DISTRIBUTION:

SPECIAL HANDLING: None

NOTES:

DATE DUE:

SIGNATURE: DATE SIGNED:
AFFILIATION:

Rec'd Off. EDO

Date 6-26-86

Time 1:45

EDO --- 001885