



50-271

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

July 9, 1998

Mr. Gregory A. Maret
Director of Operations
Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation
185 Old Ferry Road
Brattleboro, VT 05301

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING ISSUES RAISED
BY THE 10 CFR 2.206 PETITION DATED MAY 27, 1998, FROM THE CITIZENS
AWARENESS NETWORK, INC. (TAC NO. MA1964)

Dear Mr. Maret:

By Petition dated May 27, 1998, as supplemented on June 9, 1998, both enclosed, the Citizens Awareness Network, Inc (CAN or Petitioner) requested that the NRC take immediate enforcement action by suspending the operating license for the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station, operated by the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation, until the entire facility has been subjected to an independent safety analysis review similar to the one conducted at the Maine Yankee Atomic Power Station. As an alternative, the Petitioner requests that the NRC immediately act to modify the operating license for the facility by requiring that, before restart (1) Vermont Yankee management certify under oath that all backup safety systems and all security systems are fully operable, and that all safety systems and security systems meet and comply with NRC requirements; (2) Vermont Yankee be held to compliance with all of the restart criteria and protocols in the NRC [Inspection] Manual; (3) Vermont Yankee only be allowed to resume operations after the NRC has conducted a "vertical slice" examination of the degree to which the new design basis documents (DBDs) and Final Safety Analysis Report (FSAR) accurately describe at least two of the primary safety systems for the Vermont Yankee reactor; (4) once operation resumes, Vermont Yankee only be allowed to continue operation for as long as it adheres to its schedule for coming into compliance and completing the DBD and FSAR project; and (5) the NRC holds a public hearing before restart to discuss the changes to the torus, Vermont Yankee DBD and FSAR projects, and Vermont Yankee's scheduled completion of these projects in relation to operational safety.

In support of these requests, the Petitioner raised concerns about the operation of the Vermont Yankee facility, including challenges to the single-failure criterion, inadequate safety evaluations, potential overreliance on Yankee Atomic Electric Company analyses, an inadequate operational experience review program, high potential for other serious safety problems, and lack of adequate perimeter security. The Petitioner also attached four documents prepared by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS). One UCS document, dated May 14, 1998, provided a review of Vermont Yankee Daily Event Reports (DERs) made over the previous year as requested by CAN. Another UCS document, dated January 29, 1998, was addressed to the NRC Region I Senior Allegation Coordinator; it discussed a specific concern with NRC Daily Event Report 33545 of January 15, 1998, associated with Vermont Yankee

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waterhammer effects on certain systems. The third document, a UCS letter dated May 5, 1997, to the NRC Chairman and Commissioners, discussed mislocated fuel bundle loading errors. The final UCS document attached was titled "Potential Nuclear Safety Hazard Reactor Operation with Failed Fuel Cladding," dated April 2, 1998.

The Petitioner's request for immediate action to suspend or modify the operating license at Vermont Yankee was denied by letter dated July 6, 1998; however, we have not yet determined if the actions requested by the Petitioner should be taken. We are forwarding the enclosed Petition to you and we request that you address the concerns raised in the Petition (including the June 9 supplement) and address the need to perform the actions requested by CAN. Please address the requested actions and the supporting information including the ten points raised in support of the actions and the four enclosed documents with respect to your facility.

We request that you provide the information within 60 days of receipt of this letter. If you have any questions, please contact Richard Croteau at (301) 415-1475.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Cecil O. Thomas, Project Director
Project Directorate I-3
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-271

Enclosures: 1. Petition dated 5/28/98
2. Ltr to S. Jackson from
J. Block dated 6/9/98

cc w/o enclosures: See next page

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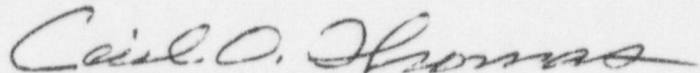
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Cecil O. Thomas, Project Director
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cc w/o enclosures: See next page

G. Maret

cc:

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