

VERMONT YANKEE LICENSE RENEWAL

Vermont Yankee is one of the oldest nuclear reactors in the U.S. but its owner Entergy wants to run the nuclear reactor for another 20 years and has applied to renew the plant's operating license with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).¹ Normally this decision rests solely in the hands of nuclear corporations and the federal regulators. However, the Vermont legislature has given itself the authority to decide whether the nuclear reactor should operate past its forty-year license or shut down in 2012.²



License Renewal & the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Environmentalists challenged the very first nuclear license renewal and shut down the Yankee Rowe reactor in Massachusetts. The reactor was shut down BEFORE its license expired because the owners couldn't prove the nuclear plant was safe to operate, let alone safe enough to run for another 20 years.³

Consequently, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission gutted their re-licensing regulations and nuclear reactors no longer had to prove that they met the terms of their original license in order to run for another 20 years. In order to extend the nuclear plant's license all the NRC requires is that the owner have programs in place to manage the aging of the nuclear reactor. According to the NRC, the regulatory process is adequate to ensure the safety of all currently operating plants, with the possible exception of the detrimental effects of aging.⁴

Unfortunately, after the shutdown of Yankee Rowe, the NRC's license renewal process has become a rubber stamp and every nuclear reactor that has since applied for a renewal has received one.

Power Up-rates & Safety

Rather than ensuring the health and safety of Vermont citizens is protected, the NRC has made decisions at Vermont Yankee that have only served to benefit Entergy's bottom line. After Entergy took over the Vermont Yankee reactor in 2002, the NRC allowed them to boost the power of the reactor and run the nuclear plant harder than ever before. The power up-rate at Vermont Yankee and at other reactors is a voluntary NRC program. The agency can not force nuclear plant licensees to adopt the power up-rates because while the up-rates boost the corporate bottom line there is no safety benefit to the public.⁵

Entergy initially applied to NRC for permission to increase Vermont Yankee's power output in 2003. The NRC's review took three years and according to the

nuclear industry “was the most thorough and detailed uprate inspection ever carried out any U.S. nuclear plant.”⁶

Despite the industry’s claims of thoroughness and detail in the NRC’s up-rate review, the engineers at Entergy & NRC obviously missed something.⁷

The collapse of the Vermont Yankee cooling tower was a direct result of the power up-rate and is evidence that



neither the NRC nor Entergy have adequately managed the aging of the Vermont Yankee reactor. Instead the NRC has placed industry profit ahead of public safety by boosting the power levels in thirty-year-old reactors.

Why should the Vermont Legislature believe that Entergy will safely manage reactor aging at Vermont Yankee 20 years into the future when they can't even do the job now?

Running Vermont Yankee for another 20 years is not a risk Vermont needs to take. Vermont Yankee only represents 2% of the electricity generation on the New England power grid. And this 2 % can be replaced with a combination of renewable electricity and efficiency measures, along with the purchase of hydropower and excess power already on the New England electric grid.⁸

Vermonters face a clear choice. Run the risk of splitting atoms at Vermont Yankee for another 20 years or choose to make Vermont nuclear free by shutting down the aging reactor and replacing it with clean renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Your Legislators Need to Hear from You!

The decision to shut down the Vermont Yankee nuclear reactor rests solely with the people of Vermont and not the federal bureaucrats and corporate executives.

Write or email your Representative today!

Dear Representative _____,

Vermont Yankee’s corporate owners want to run the nuclear reactor for another 20 years beyond its scheduled closure date of 2012. Shutting down this nuclear plant and replacing it with energy efficiency and renewable energy is critical to safeguard both the citizens and the environment of Vermont. I hope you will ensure the timely closure of the nuclear plant by 2012.

Sincerely,

For more information about the risks and costs of nuclear power and the promise of efficiency and renewable energy visit our web site at [greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org)

¹<http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/renewal/applications/vermont-yankee.html>

² <http://www.vtcitizen.org/act160>

³http://www.citizen.org/cmep/energy_enviro_nuclear/newnukes/extensions/articles.cfm?ID=4423

⁴<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/fact-sheets/license-renewal-bq.html>

⁵ <http://fdsys.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2000-08-31/html/00-22496.htm>

⁶ <http://www.safeandcleanreliable.com/updates.htm>

⁷ http://www.evacuationplans.org/acrs_vy_11-14-2005.pdf

⁸<http://www.vpirg.org/documents/decadeofchange.pdf>