



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs

Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, DC 20555-0001

E-mail: opa@nrc.gov

Web Site: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA>

No. 04-133

October 15, 2004

NRC EXTENDS REVIEW SCHEDULE FOR VERMONT YANKEE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT UPRATE REQUEST

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's review of Entergy Nuclear's application for a 20 percent power increase, or uprate, at Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station (VYNPS) will take longer than its original Jan. 31, 2005, completion date.

"The NRC, with its commitment to public health and safety, will not allow an increase in Vermont Yankee's operating power level unless we are certain the change could be done safely," said Jim Dyer, Director of the agency's Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR). "The NRC will ask Entergy for more information until we're satisfied we have what we need to properly review the application."

Early on in the review process, NRC staff made it clear that operating experience from other plants, which had performed uprates similar to what Vermont Yankee proposes, raised an important generic issue for the review concerning the potential for steam dryer failures following implementation of a power uprate.

In a letter to Entergy, Ledyard Marsh, Director of NRR's Division of Licensing Project Management, said:

"During the review, in an attempt to resolve our steam dryer concerns, the NRC staff has requested additional information, held three public meetings with Entergy, and performed an audit of the steam dryer analysis at the General Electric office in San Jose, California. Based on review of the information provided in the application, the supplements received through October 7, 2004, and the results of the audit, the NRC staff has determined that the information submitted by the licensee to date does not yet provide sufficient assurance that the VYNPS steam dryer will remain capable of maintaining its structural integrity under [uprate] conditions. During the audit and the most recent public meeting, Entergy staff indicated that further information will be submitted to address the NRC staff concerns related to steam dryer integrity."

The additional information is needed before NRC staff can complete a draft safety evaluation on the proposed uprate, and will therefore delay review by the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards, an independent group of nuclear experts. Once Entergy provides the information and NRC staff carefully reviews it, a more definitive schedule for completing the uprate review will be available.

###