



NRC NEWS

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NEW LOCATION ANNOUNCED FOR ORAL ARGUMENTS ON PETITIONS SEEKING HEARINGS ON PROPOSED VERMONT YANKEE POWER UPRATE

The location has been changed for Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) oral arguments on two requests for hearings regarding a proposed power uprate at the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. The proceedings will now take place on Oct. 21 and 22 at the Brattleboro Area Middle School, 109 Sunny Acres in Brattleboro, Vt., beginning at 9 a.m. each day.

(In an Oct. 12 press release, the NRC announced the oral arguments were to take place at the Vermont Agricultural Business Education Center in Brattleboro. However, to ensure that there is sufficient room for all who might wish to attend, a decision has been made to change the location to the Brattleboro Area Middle School.)

Members of the public are welcome to attend and observe the sessions. However, oral arguments will be limited to participants in the petition process. Because of the adjudicatory nature of the proceedings, signs, banners, posters and displays are not allowed. All interested persons should arrive early enough to allow sufficient time to pass through security screening.

Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee, LLC, which operates the plant in Vernon, Vt., is seeking permission from the NRC to increase the reactor's power output by 20 percent. To do so, its operating license must be amended. An amendment application was submitted to the NRC late last year and deemed complete as of late January. The NRC is currently reviewing that filing and will not grant approval unless the agency concludes the changes can be safely implemented. The NRC announced on Oct. 15 that although the review was expected to be completed by next Jan. 31, that process will be extended for several months to allow the agency more time to gather information about the proposal.

The request for the amendment created an opportunity for those with concerns about the power uprate to request a hearing. On Aug. 30, the Vermont Department of Public Service and the New England Coalition filed petitions with the NRC requesting a hearing on a number of issues. The ASLB, which is part of the NRC but renders decisions independently of the agency's staff, conducts all licensing and other hearings as directed by the Commission that oversees the NRC. An ASLB panel has been designated to review the Vermont Yankee petitions and determine whether a hearing is warranted. ASLB Judge Alex Karlin will lead the panel.

During the oral arguments, the ASLB will hear from participants on such issues as standing, admissibility of contentions and other preliminary issues to assist the board in expeditiously deciding such matters. The participants will include representatives of the Vermont Department of Public Service, the New England Coalition, NRC staff and Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee.

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