



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs, Region I
475 Allendale Road, King of Prussia, Pa. 19406
E-mail: opal@nrc.gov
Site: <http://www.nrc.gov>

No. I-08-044

July 9, 2008

Contact: Diane Screnci, 610/337-5330
Neil Sheehan, 610/337-5331

ASLB HEARING ON VERMONT YANKEE LICENSE RENEWAL APPLICATION SCHEDULED FOR WEEK OF JULY 21st IN NEWFANE, VT.

Beginning on Monday, July 21, three judges from the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) Panel will conduct an evidentiary hearing on an application by Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc., to renew its license to operate the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant for another 20 years. The hearing, which will focus on three contentions raised by the New England Coalition (NEC) and the Vermont Department of Public Service, will be held at the Windham County Courthouse (Vermont Superior Court), 7 Court St. in Newfane, Vt. It will start at 1 p.m. on July 21 and will continue (starting at 8:30 a.m. on subsequent days) as necessary for the remainder of the week.

The ASLB handles and decides challenges to proposed nuclear licensing matters and is a quasi-judicial arm of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The evidentiary hearing is a trial-type proceeding in which witnesses and technical experts from NEC, Entergy and the NRC staff will testify under oath, with the Board posing questions. The State of Vermont is also a party to the proceeding and the State of New Hampshire and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will participate as "Interested States."

Members of the public are welcome to attend and observe the evidentiary hearing but are not permitted to participate in this phase of the litigation. (The Board previously – on Oct. 11, 2007 – held a public session in which members of the public were able to give oral comments to the Board. In addition, members of the public may still submit written statements to the Board by e-mailing them to marcia.carpentier@nrc.gov and to hearingdocket@nrc.gov. The deadline for submitting written statements is July 20, 2008.) In the event matters at issue involve the discussion of proprietary information, portions of the hearing may be closed to the public.

Anyone interested in attending and observing the hearing should arrive 15 to 30 minutes early because ASLB proceedings commonly involve security measures, including the search of hand-carried items such as briefcases, backpacks and packages at the entrance to the courtroom. NRC procedures pertaining to such hearings prohibit the use of banners, posters and displays in the courtroom.

Entergy, which owns and operates Vermont Yankee, submitted an application to the NRC on Jan. 27, 2006, seeking a 20-year renewal of the current 40-year operating license for the facility, which is located in Vernon, Vt. The plant's current license is set to expire on March 21, 2012.

The three contentions that NEC and the State of Vermont have raised, and that will be litigated during the hearing beginning on July 21, allege the following:

Metal Fatigue Contention: The analytical methods employed in Entergy's environmentally corrected cumulative usage factor (CUFen) reanalysis were flawed by numerous uncertainties, unjustified assumptions and insufficient conservatism, and produced unrealistically optimistic results. Entergy has not, in its reanalysis or subsequent confirmatory analysis, demonstrated that the reactor components will not fail due to metal fatigue during the period of extended operation.

Steam Dryer Contention: The license renewal application does not include an adequate plan to monitor and manage aging of the plant's steam dryer during the period of extended operation. (The steam dryer, a component located inside the top of the reactor vessel, removes moisture from steam produced in the reactor before it flows to the turbine to generate electricity.)

Flow-Accelerated Corrosion Contention: The license renewal application does not include an adequate plan to monitor and manage aging of plant piping due to flow-accelerated corrosion during the period of extended operation.

More information about the ASLB Panel is available at: <http://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/organization/aslbfuncdesc.html>.

Additional information about the Vermont Yankee license renewal application is available on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/renewal/applications/vermont-yankee.html>, and in the agency's electronic docket, where documents from the ASLB proceeding on Vermont Yankee may be found by going to http://ehd.nrc.gov/EHD_Proceeding/home.asp and then clicking on the "Vermont_Yankee_50-271-LR" proceeding.

####

News releases are available through a free *listserv* subscription at the following Web address: <http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/listserver.html>. The NRC homepage at www.nrc.gov also offers a SUBSCRIBE link. E-mail notifications are sent to subscribers when news releases are posted to NRC's Web site.

