



January 22, 2009.
For immediate release.
Further information: Jim Matteau—257-4547 ext 106.

WRC Files Testimony in VY Extension Case

Brattleboro—Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee (VY) has applied to the Vermont Public Service Board (PSB) to extend operation of the nuclear power plant beyond the current expiration date of March 12, 2012. The Windham Regional Commission is a party to that proceeding and has submitted its pre-filed testimony to the PSB on January 22, 2009.

In its testimony, the WRC emphasizes that it neither supports nor opposes the VY petition. “Rather, our task has been to highlight specific questions and issues that we believe require scrutiny...” it states, adding that “We also have a responsibility to support public awareness and understanding of major public policy issues and to assist public participation in related policy decisions.”

“It is more typical for parties to enter these proceedings as clear supporters or opponents of a given proposal”, said WRC executive director Jim Matteau, “so it’s understandable for people to automatically assume that’s what everyone does. But others at the state and federal level are charged with determining whether the facility can operate safely and reliably. And if they decide that it can continue, then we want to help ensure that local towns and citizens, including future generations, are well served by the environmental and economic requirements that accompany that decision.”

In its testimony, the WRC identifies five specific areas of concern, calling on the PSB to require:

- A new Decommissioning Cost Analysis based on reliable cost estimates;
- A commitment to minimal rate guarantees to benefit Vermont ratepayers, which could be based on the cost of generation, not market rates for power generated in some other way;
- A revised site remediation plan, to reflect a “greenfield” approach, leaving behind a site that is ready for new use, instead of the proposed action, which would effectively leave behind a “brownfield” for others to fully remediate in the future;
- An updated Spent Fuel Management Plan that includes reduced density in the spent fuel pool and the addition of a long term storage facility; and
- Maintenance of full core offload capability at all times during the plant’s operating life.

“The deadline for prefiled written testimony isn’t until February 6, and that’s when we expect all other parties will file their testimony,” said WRC Energy Committee chair Tom Buchanan of Londonderry. “However, the WRC testimony doesn’t contain any information that we haven’t already discussed publicly, so we felt that filing it now was the right thing to do.”

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