

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 10, 2005

The Honorable Nils J. Diaz  
Chairman  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Dear Mr. Chairman:

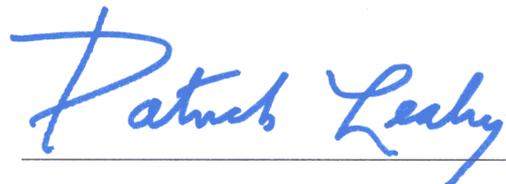
We write in response to the announcement today of the discovery, during a recent scheduled outage, of more than 40 additional cracks in the steam dryer at Vermont Yankee. We understand that a Region 1 Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) inspector was dispatched to assist the resident inspector in the determining whether these cracks pose safety and operational concerns for the plant's current power production. We request that the condition of the steam dryer be fully evaluated, using the techniques of the most recent inspection and any other appropriate means, as the NRC considers Entergy Nuclear's request to produce an additional 100 megawatts of power from Vermont Yankee.

We understand that these cracks were discovered through the use of enhanced visual inspection techniques. As you know, these cracks are in addition to some 18 cracks, both hairline and larger, that were discovered through visual inspections of the plant's steam dryer in April and May of 2004. Steam dryer cracking is of concern at many boiling water reactor facilities. We know that cracking problems have persisted at the Quad Cities facilities' steam dryers, despite repeated fixes, and that uprated power conditions at those facilities place additional stresses on dryer performance. While the steam dryer itself is not a safety-related piece of equipment, its proper functioning is important to the plant's safe and reliable operation. Steam dryer cracking could result in pieces breaking off, and falling back into the steam lines that lead out of the reactor. In the case of the Quad Cities reactors, these plants have been forced to shut down because of cracking, making their operation less reliable.

As the NRC reviews the Vermont Yankee power uprate request, we believe it is essential that our constituents receive needed information about whether the plant's steam dryer will be able to withstand boosted power conditions and operate safely and reliably. The functioning of this piece of equipment should receive the Commission's full and thorough attention during the review of the uprate application.

We look forward to a prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Diaz, pg. 2  
November 10, 2005

Bert A. L.

John W. Oliver