

Life Without Vermont Yankee Questions & Answers

1. Where will we get our electricity from?

The electricity that Vermont utilities buy from Vermont Yankee can be easily replaced by a combination of biomass power, hydro-power, wind power and solar power. There is also excess power in New England today which would allow Vermont utilities to keep the lights on while we build our own generation. Vermont does have plentiful renewable resources that can be developed in-state. Additionally, conservation and efficiency can be utilized to eliminate up to 30% of our future electricity needs. Hydro-Quebec is likely to remain in the picture providing a substantial portion of Vermont's electricity. Right now Vermont's residents have the will but we lack the elected leadership to make our clean energy future a reality.

2. What will our electric costs be? Will they go up?

With or without Vermont Yankee our electricity costs are going to rise. In New England the price of all new contracts for electricity are determined by the price of natural gas which has risen dramatically over the past 10 years. In an attempt to gain the support of legislators and the Public Service Board, it is likely that Vermont Yankee's owners will offer a slightly better than market deal to Vermont utilities. However, they will also leave us with over 1 million pounds of high-level nuclear waste, a contaminated site, and the risk of a catastrophic accident. Vermont tax payers also pick up the tab because Vermont Yankee doesn't pay their fair share of property taxes due to a tax loophole. Tax payers will pay to insure the plant (as we always have) and generations to come will be left with a toxic mess. We have a choice: what resources will we rely on to meet our electricity needs, an aging nuclear plant or new safe and clear power from local resources?

3. How much money is needed to decommission Vermont Yankee?

The current estimate is that it will cost \$800 million dollars to decommission Vermont Yankee. However, all of the reactors that have been decommissioned to date in New England went significantly over initial estimates. The fund that is supposed to cover the cleanup has just over \$350 million in it today. No money has been added to the fund since Entergy bought the plant and construction costs have increased significantly faster than inflation or the investments in the fund.

4. What does it mean for Vermont Yankee to spin off a separate corporation?

Entergy Corporation is the wealthy, Louisiana-based, parent Corporation which owns Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee (ENVY). This subsidiary, ENVY, directly owns the Vermont Yankee plant in Vernon, Vermont. ENVY is a limited liability corporation which may shield the parent company. Entergy Corporation also wants to sell the Vermont Yankee plant and 5 other nuclear plants to a newly created company. This new company will be

below investment grade because it will be so indebted. This transaction would raise over \$4 billion for Entergy Corporation.

Vermonters are likely to be stuck with at least some of the clean up costs unless the state holds Entergy or the new spin off parent company that may be created to Entergy's original promise.

- 2002: Entergy buys Vermont Yankee and promises to pay for all of the decommissioning costs
- 2008: Entergy goes back on their promise and says that they are not responsible but that a limited liability corporation they set up is responsible (ENVY or Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee).
- 2008: Entergy proposes to sell off its limited liability company to a new parent company that would have limited financial resources.

Regardless of whether or not Entergy sells off Vermont Yankee we are at risk of getting stuck with the decommissioning costs. However, it does look like it might be even worse if the plant is sold off.

5. What can we do to close Vermont Yankee?

Contact our local representative and organize in your hometown. The legislature has the power to deny VY its operating permit when they vote in 2009. Get in touch with your neighbors by talking with them one on one both in person and by phone, and urge them to contact your representative. Also set up a meeting with your representative to discuss the issue in person. Read about campaign strategies in your activist handbook.

6. What about France? Don't they use nuclear power efficiently and safely?

France reprocesses their spent fuel which does not solve the nuclear waste problem; in fact many say fuel reprocessing increases hazards, risk, and harm. First, reprocessing is paid for by citizens and is very expensive. Second, it creates weapons grade plutonium. Finally, it creates radioactive waste liquid that is discharged into the ocean and has leaked into France's ground water, radioactive gases that are put into the air and solid waste that, just like the original waste product, requires a high-level nuclear waste disposal site (which does not exist).

Yes, we too could have multiple waste storage problems instead of one if we chose to reprocess nuclear waste in the United States but we would be better off not creating any more of it in the first place.