

## Decommissioning Vermont Yankee

### Problem

In 2002 the owners of the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant promised to take full responsibility for the Decommissioning fund – a special trust of money that will be used to clean up the Nuclear plant whenever it closes down.

In 2008 Entergy changed it's story – they now say that despite making billions in profits from this one plant, they have no responsibility for its Decommissioning fund and that a special 'limited liability corporation' is responsible.

That's a big problem for Vermonters because Entergy shorted payments to the fund in previous years, and invested the money in the stock market. As a result the Decommissioning fund has lost value since 2002 – it contains about \$350 million right now, less than half of estimated at \$1 billion dollars it will cost to clean up the site.

If there's not enough money in the fund to clean up the site Vermonters will be left with a toxic nuclear waste dump and need to come up with a plan to raise the \$700 million

### Solution

New legislation under consideration in the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee would require the owner of the plant to be responsible for the decommissioning cost - essentially saying that if you own the plant and collect the profit, you have to clean up the site when the plant is shut down.

### Other facts to share with legislators

- This bill is similar to a Decommissioning bill the legislature passed last year with overwhelming support (Governor Douglas vetoed that bill)
- Entergy claims that Vermont Yankee is owned by a subsidiary corporation that sends all its profits to Entergy. They also say that the subsidiary has no obligation to uphold responsibilities agreed to by Entergy.
- Entergy would like to put the plant in 'safe store' for up to 60 years and assume that the stock market will grow enough to meet the \$1 billion+ obligation

## Fence line Radiation levels

### Problem

When asking permission to increase the amount of power produced at Vermont Yankee – Entergy nuclear (the plant's owners) promised that radiation emissions from the plant would not increase.

But when the up-rate happened radiation emission broke legal limits. Instead of enforcing the law by addressing the increase in radiation, the State Health Department changed the rules for how radiation emissions are measured at the plant's boundary or 'fence line'. The fence in question is across from an elementary school – so the concern is a serious one.

The old standard measured how much radiation a person's whole body would be exposed to at the edge of Vermont Yankee's property. The health department wanted to arbitrarily reduce the exposure to 60% of a test-subjects body. That change is actually a violation of the law, however, and the Legislature and media called them on it

The Health Department is undertaking a rule making process now to decide what the proper level of radiation emission should be. But Entergy is still breaking the law by emitting too much radiation. And the Health Department is still trying to change the standard to allow Entergy to emit more radiation, rather than focusing on how much radiation is safe (none).

### Solution

The Vermont Legislature should continue to press the Department of health to enforce the current law, and not to change the standard to allow Yankee to emit more radiation.

### Other facts to share with legislators

- Recent studies have concluded that there is no safe level of exposure to radiation
- Children are more susceptible to radiation's effects than adults because their bodies are still developing, and radioactive mutations to their cells and DNA may have a more lasting effect.
- Activists and health experts have been warning for months that the plant is emitting too much radiation under the law, but the Department of Health continues to turn a blind eye to this one polluter. How many businesses in Vermont get a free pass to break emissions rules?