

For Immediate Release

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**Call on Entergy Corp to close Vermont Yankee with just transition
for workers, their families, and communities**

After failing to make its case that Vermont Yankee was safe and green, and after failing to persuade with its December 18 power purchase offer, Entergy now banks on unionized workers to make its case.

In a personal statement, Traven Leyshon, an elected District Vice President of the Vermont AFL-CIO and President of the Green Mountain Labor Council, AFL-CIO, which includes unions in Washington, Orange, and Lamoille Counties, states:

“Entergy is not a socially responsible corporation that should be running an aging nuclear plant. Entergy has proven its disrespect for their employees by management union busting when employees tried to organize unions to win basic workplace rights, by their sleazy attempt to get out of paying for decommissioning Yankee, and by their poor management and maintenance of the plant.

“The first concern of our unions is to protect our members. We should be working together with our allies to make sure that when Yankee does close workers are not left high and dry. It is my hope that our unions, environmentalists, and other concerned citizens will work together to guarantee any worker impacted their full wages and benefits until a comparable job can be found.

“As with any unjustified firing, workers should be made whole in terms of wages and benefits. Untold millions will be spent on decommissioning the plant, cleaning up piles of contaminated dirt. Why should we treat dirt better than we treat workers? We can't allow the workers to be tossed onto the economic scrap heap.

“And Entergy should be paying the bill. They have the money: In 2009 Entergy paid its Chairman and CEO J. Wayne Leonard \$35.14 million. If he could get by on a meager \$1 million per year, the saved \$68 million over the next two years could go towards a just transition fund for compensating and retraining workers equal to \$105,046 for each of the 650 workers.

“Vermonters should also be working with the workers' unions to make sure that the new jobs created in cleaning up Yankee and in alternative energy are good family-wage union jobs.”

Traven Leyshon can be reached at 802 223-4172 or on his cell at 802 522-3484

We would also respectfully ask for consideration of the following:

- The idea of running this aging nuclear plant for twenty two more years has little public support. As one illustration, at Town Meeting last March, 37 Vermont towns voted overwhelmingly to close Vermont Yankee on schedule in 2012 and require Entergy to pay for decommissioning. Only 2 towns voted down that resolution.

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- What does have public support is recognition of the rights of workers at the plant.
- We therefore demand that Entergy Corporation plan for a just transition that will continue to provide jobs at union wages or retraining at full pay during a reasonable transition period. Entergy Corporation should pay into a decommissioning fund an amount to guarantee retraining and compensation for all the workers involved.
- No one is calling for operating this aging, obsolete, dangerous, leaky radioactive nuclear plant forever. We encourage the union to work with the rest of the citizens of our state, including those of us working in the environmental campaign, to demand that Entergy Corporation plan for a just transition.
- Closing the plant on schedule in March, 2012--twenty six months from now--gives Entergy Corporation ample time to implement a just transition for its employees. It gives Vermonters and the unions time to build a coalition demanding that Entergy Corporation fulfill its responsibility to its workers. In addition, it provides time for some of the workers to find other employment within the efficiency and the renewable energy industries, both of which will expand and remain in Vermont for many years. And neither of which involves carbon or exposure to radioactive emissions and wastes.
- Closing the plant on schedule does not mean that all jobs will be lost. After all, a billion dollars is going to be spent by the Entergy Corporation on decommissioning. And that means jobs for many workers for ten or fifteen years.
- The news release put out by the unions makes a very good point where it says, "Renewable power sources and efficiency should definitely be in the mix and will create jobs." The best way to turn our attention to renewable power sources and efficiency, to create those jobs, and to move workers from Vermont Yankee into those jobs is to let Vermont Yankee close on schedule in 2012 and require Entergy Corporation to pay for decommissioning its plant, including a just transition for all its workers.
- We would ask workers to consider what kind of job security they expect working for the spinoff company Entergy has in the works, a spinoff that is deeply in debt? Weren't unions rightly opposing such a deal when it was Verizon bailing out to Fairpoint?
- We would ask the building trades unions to work with Vermonters to require a just transition rather than putting themselves in the position of labor-washing for an out of state multibillion dollar company running an aging and leaking nuclear power plant producing a highly radioactive waste product. Especially when that company is trying to take its money out, unload to a spinoff that will be deeply in debt, and run away from Vermont?
- Vermont Yankee eventually has to close. Isn't it to the advantage of all Vermonters, including union workers, to let it close on schedule, before its leaking, aging equipment has a serious incident and is forced to shut down? We only need to look at the chaos caused by the abrupt failure of the Champlain Bridge to understand that we are better off methodically closing the plant now, as per its designed life, and per the agreement struck with Vermont 38 years ago.