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Article written by the Community Decommissioning Advisory Committee

### **CDAC Members Say Dry Storage May be Best Option**

Even with lots of community discussion - even dissension – focusing around Connecticut Yankee's plan to establish a dry storage facility for its spent nuclear fuel, members of the Citizens Decommissioning Advisory Committee (CDAC) who've seen such a facility seem convinced that CY's proposed plan may be the best option at this time.

Four CDAC members and one Haddam selectman toured the Palisades nuclear power plant in Michigan in late summer to see the dry cask storage facility where that plant keeps its spent fuel. That facility is quite like the one CY hopes to install to replace the wet storage now being used at its Haddam Neck site. CY has already applied to the Haddam Planning and Zoning Commission for permission to rezone a portion of its site to build such a facility.

Palisades covers 432 acres, a bit less than CY's 525 acres. Still producing electricity, Palisades draws its cooling water from Lake Michigan, just as CY once drew from the Connecticut River. Its dry cask facility occupies just a small part of its site.

Some members of CDAC were impressed. Edward Kalinowski, vice-chairman of CDAC and First Selectman of Portland, said that he came away from the trip thinking that dry cask storage was not just the most economical way to store nuclear fuel, but probably the safest as well. "There are no moving parts," he said of the large concrete pad on which Palisades keeps 18 containers of spent fuel. In addition, he said, the huge metal and concrete casks can also be transported - and taken away if the federal government ever opens a central fuel storage site. "That's another safety feature," he said.

Other members of CDAC commented on what seemed to be the safety aspect. Joyce Rossiter of Middletown said that from the concrete pad at Palisades, hikers are visible on a nearby trail leading to Lake Michigan and that boaters and bathers on the lake seem unconcerned by the proximity of fuel storage. And the dosimeters worn by each member of CDAC showed no discernible radiation. But while Rossiter sees dry cask storage as better than the present fuel pool now at CY, she is concerned that the federal government has yet to establish a long-promised storage facility in Nevada. That is where the spent fuel should go, she thinks. "Connecticut is thickly settled," she said. "Nevada is not - and my feeling is that eventually we should get the spent fuel out of Connecticut."

Haddam selectman Fred Edelstein, who visited Palisades with CDAC, did not seem impressed with dry cask storage one way or the other. He sees it as less-proven than wet storage, which he feels has worked for 30 years. He believes, however, that Haddam should draw tax revenue for allowing CY to store spent fuel, and that CY should pass along savings from dry storage to Haddam taxpayers. It was a point he made September 18 at a well-attended town meeting where many residents voiced concern about CY and fuel storage. It may be an issue the town will pursue if a dry storage facility is built, according to First Selectman Tony Bondi. "Any building project would be assessed upon completion," Bondi said.

CDAC member Alan Bergren, town manager of East Hampton, seemed impressed with the safety and efficiency of dry cask storage, and of the Palisades plant and the people who administer and protect the dry storage facility. "They were very professional," he said, answering all CDAC questions and providing information about the facility. Bergren said that boaters and people enjoying the lakeside resort community nearby seemed unconcerned by the power plant or the storage facility. He was convinced that dry cask storage is the best way to keep spent nuclear fuel. "You don't need the infrastructure of a fuel pool," he said. "There's no separate building, no water to monitor, no electricity. You can go from a complex system to a rugged, simpler system easier to maintain and monitor." He thought the visit a valuable one. "We've seen first hand the kind of thing CY wants to do," he said. "They've been a good corporate citizen, and I think we can rest assured that the dry cask storage they propose is the best and safest way to store nuclear fuel on-site."

CDAC member Rosemary Bassilakis of Haddam, also a member of the Citizens Awareness Network, who has often raised issues of nuclear safety, said she noted water run-off and lack of continuous monitoring at Palisades - and believes that safety must be stressed as CY plans its facility. Concerned about the long-term effects of nuclear storage, she said, "We have to entertain the possibility that it will be here for a long time...and he have to be sure that Haddam is safe for the next 60 or 100 years."

"This was an important trip," said Mike Cavanaugh, CY's director of information, who set up the Palisades trip. "We can see videos and pictures, but until CDAC member had a chance to see the dry storage facility, to walk around the casks and touch them and get an idea of their size and shape, they didn't have a complete picture of what we want to do at CY."

### **CDAC Will Moderate LTP Meeting October 17**

On October 17 members of the Community Decommissioning Advisory Committee will participate in the public hearing at which Connecticut Yankee will discuss aspects of its License Termination Plan. The hearing to be held at Haddam-Killingworth Regional High School, will be moderated by CDAC vice-chairman Edward Kalinowski, who is also First Selectman of Portland. Under the License Termination Plan (LTP) which CY submitted to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in late spring, CY is asking for permission to release a large portion of its 525 acres for unrestricted use. Such use could be anything from residential to agricultural or industrial. Although the LTP meeting follows closely on another CY initiative – a plan to develop a dry cask storage facility in which to store its spent nuclear fuel - the two are separate issues. Under its original license from the NRC, CY was authorized to operate the Haddam Neck nuclear power plant to produce electricity. When the plan shut down in 1996, the license was amended to allow the storage of spent fuel only - now kept on-site in a spent fuel pool. CY wants to establish a dry storage facility for that fuel and applied September 21 to the Haddam Planning and Zoning Commission for a zoning change on 12 acres to develop the facility. The request was not acted on and the commission will hold another meeting October 23 to further discuss the issue.

To terminate its license and to release the property for further use, CY must decommission the Haddam Neck site by removing buildings and equipment once associated with the plant. It must clean the site, survey and further test the site to be sure it meets radiation standards established by the NRC. In addition, CY intends that the site also meet standards to be set by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

One purpose for the October 17 meeting is to explain what the NRC standards are and how CY intends to meet them. The program will include a presentation by the NRC on the decommissioning process and a presentation by CY officials on the LTP, including CY's plan to clean the site and ensure that radiation standards are met. Following additional remarks by NRC officials, there will be two hours for public comments and questions. Kalinowski believes that there will be many questions and comments. He attended a special town meeting September 18 at which many Haddam residents expressed concern about decommissioning and long-term storage. He said that that meeting was occasionally "contentious" - and says that his role will be to keep the October 17 hearing focused. "This is an NRC meeting about the LTP," he said. "You have to hear the concerns of the public, but we don't want to lose track of what the meeting is about."

### **[View the LTP Yourself](#)**

The Connecticut Yankee License Termination Plan is available for review at the Connecticut Yankee Information Center in Haddam Neck; at the Russell Library in Middletown; and the Brainerd Library in Haddam. It can also be downloaded from the Connecticut Yankee web site: [www.connyankee.com](http://www.connyankee.com)

### **[Facts on dry cask storage](#)**

As of August 2000,

- First dry cask storage facility established in Surry, VA in 1986.
- 14 nuclear plants in 13 states have dry cask facilities, holding 196 casks.
- 11 more plants in 11 separate states have projected plans for dry storage by the end of 2003.
- By 2010, as many as 47 plants in 30 states may have dry storage facilities.

Department of Energy figures