

DECOMMISSIONING BEGINS AT CY

Transition Will Be Gradual

Haddam Neck, CT. — May 4, 1998. Connecticut Yankee Atomic Power Company today announced it will begin more significant decommissioning activities at the Connecticut Yankee (CY) nuclear plant after receiving notification that a year-long effort to enhance the plant's radiological safety program has met with Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) approval.

The extensive improvements to the Radiation Protection Program were developed and implemented after the NRC issued a Confirmatory Action Letter (CAL) in March 1997 requiring specific improvements to the program before significant radiological work could begin. As part of the improvement process, CY hired new people, retrained all of its workers, instituted new procedures and controls, and developed a self-assessment program to continuously monitor radiological work practices. After a recent inspection of the new program, the NRC today removed the CAL paving the way for increasing decommissioning activities.

"This is a major milestone for CY," said CY President and CEO Don Davis. "It's our responsibility now to demonstrate that not only have we improved our radiation safety program, but that it will be vigilantly followed throughout the decommissioning process." "In addition to our own monitoring process, the NRC will continue to closely scrutinize our program to ensure that we are in full compliance," Davis added.

Russ Mellor, VP of Operations and Decommissioning said, "There will be a gradual transition to full-scale decommissioning." "Our workforce is well-trained and prepared to begin the decommissioning process. We will proceed slowly and carefully and evaluate our processes and procedures under actual decommissioning conditions before we begin full scale activities."

Once full scale decommissioning begins, all of the plant's systems and components, including pipes, valves, pumps and large components such as the steam generators and reactor vessel will be methodically dismantled, removed and shipped to a licensed disposal or nuclear recycling facility. The process will take about 6 to 7 years to complete. In addition to smalledismantlement projects, CY expects to conduct three major decommissioning activities in 1998, including the chemical cleaning of the inside of the reactor coolant piping system, the electrical and mechanical isolation of the Spent Fuel Pool Storage Building, and the removal, preparation and transport of the first of CY's four steam generators.

Mellor stressed that although these activities have been scheduled, radiological and industrial safety would be the first priority and that management would not sacrifice safety or quality of work to meet these schedules.

Since decommissioning is "construction in reverse" requiring many of the same procedures and tools used in traditional construction, industrial safety will be extremely important. "Our approach to industrial safety is as stringent as our improved approach to radiological safety," said Mellor. "Safe work practices will be strictly enforced during decommissioning."

The decommissioning process at CY will also be monitored and regulated by other federal, state and local authorities. The new CY management team has been actively working with these organizations and local groups to establish clear and open lines of communication in preparation for the beginning of more significant decommissioning activities. "Our sole focus is the safe and efficient decommissioning of CY," said Davis. "Everyone has worked hard to get to this point. We're ready."

The Connecticut Yankee Nuclear Power Station permanently shut down in December 1996 after 28 years of service.

1998 DECOMMISSIONING ACTIVITIES DESCRIPTION AND SCHEDULE

- The chemical cleaning of the inside of the reactor coolant piping system is scheduled for June and July. This process, which has been successfully used in other decommissioning projects worldwide, removes over 90 percent of the radioactivity and reduces worker exposures during the dismantlement process.
- The electrical and mechanical isolation of the Spent Fuel Pool Storage Building will be continued. CY must safely store its 1019 used fuel assemblies onsite until the Department of Energy removes them to a centralized storage or disposal facility. Creating a Spent Fuel Pool "Island" that operates independently of the rest of the plant will ensure that decommissioning activities do not impact safe storage of the used fuel.
- The removal, preparation and transport of the first of CY's four steam generators is currently scheduled for late fall. These components were shipped to CY in one piece, by barge, when the plant was constructed. Each will be removed in one piece and shipped by barge to a low-level waste disposal facility in South Carolina. Steam generator removal is not exclusively a decommissioning activity. Many operating plants have removed and replaced their steam generators.