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A News Release from Beyond Nuclear

For Immediate Release: February 25, 2010

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Vermont Vote Signals Nuclear Retreat *Sets Precedent for Other States' Action*

(Takoma Park, MD) In a roll call the Vermont State Senate voted 26 to 4 to block the federal relicensing of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant operated by its parent company Entergy Nuclear. The vote is an overwhelmingly statement of "no confidence" in both the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission's 20-year relicensing oversight process and the continued operation of nuclear power in Vermont beyond the reactor's current 40-year license which expires on March 12, 2012. Beyond Nuclear hailed the state vote to shutter the aging reactor as a victory for local democracy and a beacon for other states to assert more control over radioactive trespasses by the nuclear industry.

"Vermont is at the forefront of a fight to rein in an undemocratic technology and a promotionally biased licensing process," said Paul Gunter, Director of the Reactor Oversight Project for Beyond Nuclear, a national group opposed to nuclear power and nuclear weapons. "The vote is precedent setting," Gunter continued. "Vermont has said it is not in the best interest of a state to allow nuclear plants to operate without a waste disposal plan, with insufficient radioactive cleanup funds and shielded by shell corporations hiding behind limited liability firewalls," said Gunter. "At least New York, New Hampshire and Massachusetts took notice of the vote's implications for companion initiatives in their states," he concluded.

Gunter is referring to the growing number of examples of the undemocratic impositions thrust upon states and community hosts by nuclear power technology that includes extending operating licenses and nuclear waste generation without any scientifically approved long-term environmental management plan. Reactor sites like Vermont Yankee are de facto indefinite nuclear waste storage facilities at best and possibly permanent radioactive dumps that were never

environmentally qualified as such for either an original 40-year license or a 20-year license renewal proceeding. Vermonters voted "no confidence" in the Entergy Nuclear effort to spin off continued operational costs and ultimately its decommissioning commitment for atomic cleanup and site deconstruction to a shell corporation (Enexus) where industry is establishing Limited Liability Corporations as a common business practice with the consolidation of more reactors into fewer parent nuclear corporations. Similarly, the vote shows "no confidence in the NRC and throws a legal blockade in front of a federal relicensing proceeding. The NRC sees no nexus between the uncontrolled and still undiscovered radioactive leaks and the public's health and safety and its relicensing process failed to capture the aging buried pipes now leaking.

Vermont Yankee has been beset with controversy and operational challenges from the very beginning. The year the atomic power plant began commercial operation in 1972, the Atomic Energy Commission (the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission's predecessor) announced that it would no longer accept utility applications for the construction of a General Electric Mark I Boiling Water Reactor because of the design's poor quality. In the past few years, the reactor had a series of mishaps including a dramatic transformer explosion and fire, the collapse of a cooling tower component and more recently a radioactive leak to protected groundwater announced in January 2010 where the source remains undiscovered to date.

Entergy Nuclear, the Louisiana-based parent company, destroyed its credibility on whether or not the reactor's 20-year license extension was in the best interest of the state by submitting false information under oath to a State Senate oversight panel regarding the reactor's as-built design for buried pipes carrying radioactive effluent. High-level Entergy management officials had claimed that there were not buried pipes under the reactor and thus no need to be concerned about radioactive contamination of groundwater. On January 6, 2010, Entergy disclosed that a radioactive leak had occurred as is occurring at a growing number of reactors, 28 units by the NRC's latest count around the country. The source of Vermont Yankee's uncontrolled and unmonitored radioactive leaks has not been determined to date.

Additional examples of the nuclear industry retreat from its much touted "renaissance" can be viewed on the Beyond Nuclear website at <http://www.beyondnuclear.org/the-nuclear-retreat/>