

Rowe shutdown pleases Vermont's lawmakers

By Michael Tighe
The Associated Press

MONTPELIER — Tuesday's recommendation to shut down the Yankee Rowe nuclear plant was praised by politicians but rapped by nearby residents.

The staff of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission urged the immediate shutdown of the western Massachusetts plant because of new safety concerns.

The 31-year-old nuclear plant, the oldest in the country, sits a few miles from several towns along the southern Vermont border.

"Yankee Rowe has been endangering the health and safety of millions of New Englanders every day it continues to operate," said Rep. Bernard Sanders, I-Vt.

People living in the shadow of

the plant, though, are not so convinced.

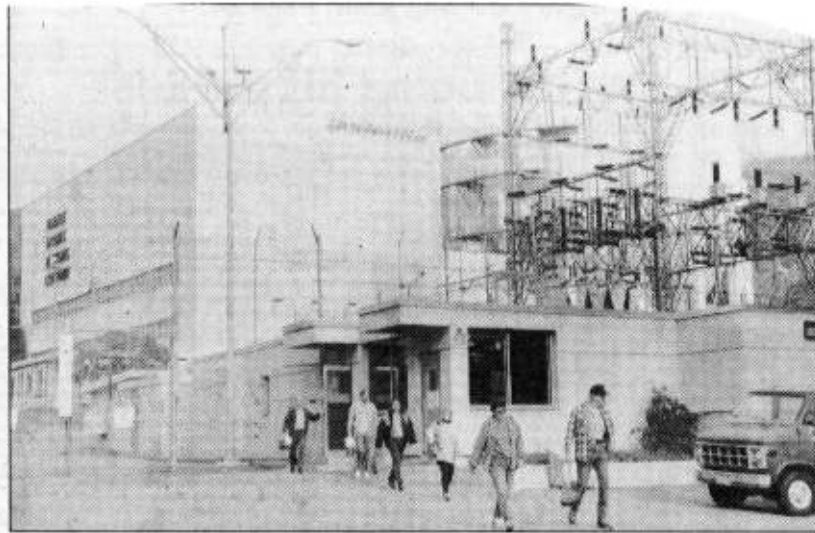
"I think it's an overreaction," said William Levine, Stamford's civil defense director. "It's a reaction to people's anti-nuclear sentiment. It was an emotional response rather than a factual response."

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., recently called for the plant's shutdown.

"You don't patch and tape when you are dealing with a nuclear reactor," Leahy said Tuesday. "You shut the whole thing down and you don't start it up again until every contingency has been accounted for."

Sen. James Jeffords, R-Vt., said the decision to close was a wise one.

"I'm sure they are not only



ALAN SOLOMON, *The Associated Press*

Workers leave Yankee Rowe nuclear power plant as shifts change Tuesday. The plant has been shut down over safety issues.

concerned with public safety, but the perceptions of the whole nuclear industry."

Gov. Howard Dean said the NRC staffers are experts, so the recommendation should be fol-

lowed.

"When the NRC technical staff calls for a shutdown, there's no question it should be shut down and shut down at once," he said.