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March 22, 2012

## Energy Issues: Entergy Has Demonstrators Arrested By ABBY LUBY



*(L-R)-Matthew Manning, Erik Gillard, Kate*

*Damascus, Madeline Sharrow and Barry Wyman of SAGE inside Entergy Corporate Headquarters in White Plains. Photo courtesy of Abby Luby Photos. >>>*



WHITE PLAINS, NY -- Peaceful demonstrators at Entergy Nuclear corporate headquarters in White Plains were arrested today, Thursday, March 22, 2012, for criminal trespassing. Five members of SAGE (Safe and Green Energy), a group from Vermont, came to meet with Entergy officials to discuss shutting down the company's Vermont Yankee plant.

The Vermont contingent, which calls themselves the Green Mountain Delegation, were kept waiting for about 15 minutes in the Entergy's lobby at 440 Hamilton Avenue in White Plains while the front security guard attempted to call several Entergy executives, all of whom were apparently out of the office. When the guard was called away, GMD members made their way up to Entergy's 12th floor offices via the stairway where they were met by one Entergy employee.

"We want to speak Richard Smith," said GMD member Erik Gillard, who was joined by Madeline Sharrow, Kate Damascus, Barry Wyman and Matthew Manning. Richard Smith, is the president of Entergy's Wholesale Commodities.

"You are trespassing and you have to leave," said a young woman employee. "If you go downstairs now, we will send a proper escort to accompany you back up here."

Gillard said he wanted assurances the group wouldn't be kept waiting again, but was again told to leave. At that point Gillard started to read from a list of demands, explaining that the group merely wanted to talk to Smith about decommissioning the Vermont Yankee plant.

Two building guards appeared and each member of the GMD began to read a set of demands. The guards tried to convince them to leave, but the Vermont group was steadfast in holding their ground while continuing to read their demands.

Ten minutes later four White Plains police arrived and arrested all five, handcuffing them and escorting them to a paddy wagon. They were taken to the White Plains police station at 77 South Lexington Avenue.

Attorneys Joel Kupferman and Peter Madison of the National Lawyer's Guild were on hand as legal observers to make sure the police were treating the arrestees fairly. Nicole Sasaki of Pace College was also present.

After the arrest, the White Plains court fined Gillard and Manning \$250 and dropped the charges from a misdemeanor to a violation, and stipulated that they must not re-visit Entergy's 12th floor headquarters for one year. Sharrow, Damascus and Wyman each posted \$250 bail and have a court date May 2, 2012 where they hope to get the case dismissed.

Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition, a group seeking to shutter Indian Point, was demonstrating outside the Hamilton Avenue Entergy headquarters. Indian Point, also owned by Entergy, applied to renew their operating license in 2007. The current licenses expire next year, 2013, and in 2015.

Among the demands GMD asked for were for Entergy to “cease its attack on Vermont’s democratic process and honor agreements it signed with the state of Vermont (including that it decommission immediately 3/22)... begin the decommissioning of the Fukushima style Mark I BW reactor immediately. pay reparations to all communities whose land and lives have been made toxic by the uranium fuel chain, pay the full costs of all legal proceedings past and present involving the state of Vermont and revoke all statements claiming nuclear power to be clean, carbon-free or renewable. The Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant is in Brattleboro 3½ miles from the Massachusetts border and right across the Connecticut River from New Hampshire. Although the nuclear plant is under the jurisdiction of Vermont, dangerous radioactive leaks and other accidents have troubled residents in nearby Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

The non-violent action was one many, similar actions that were directed at Entergy in different locations. Groups appeared at Entergy offices in Brattleboro, Vermont while other activists attempted to occupy Entergy’s corporate offices in New Orleans, Louisiana. Vermont Yankee has been plagued with as many problems as Indian Point; both plants, which were built to last only 40 years are now 40 years old. Both plants have had numerous leaks of radioactive isotopes into the Hudson River (Indian Point) and the Connecticut River (Vermont Yankee) and has had to contend with storing thousands of gallons of radioactive spent fuel on site. Indian Point 1, which has been closed since 1974, has been leaking radioactive materials into the soil and the river. The Buchanan based plant is also running out of space to store spent fuel with some 1500 tons of spent fuel stored in canisters at the plant on an outdoor tarmac.

Both have applied to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to continue their operating license for another 20 years. But in Vermont, state officials voted overwhelmingly for Vermont Yankee’s shut down, forcing Entergy to sue the state. Entergy basically said the state has no voice in the matter and that it is under the jurisdiction of the federal government. Wednesday, March 21<sup>st</sup> would have been the last day of Vermont Yankee’s license, but the NRC granted an extension of their license, overriding the state of Vermont. Since Vermont Yankee has to operate with a current “Certificate of Public Good” from their Public Service Board, state officials have argued with a federal court judge not to renew the certificate. Entergy is fighting the case which is expected to be resolved. Vermont Yankee CPG certificate expired Wednesday, March 21, 2012.

Vermont has said if Entergy defies the PSB if the ruling is against the company, “Entergy could face the prospect of a diminished credit rating, a loss of crucial employees, and a demerit in the PSB’s consideration of (Entergy’s) petition for a new CPG.”

Closing both the Vermont Yankee and Indian Point in Westchester is problematic for Entergy because they lack necessary funds needed to decommission and shut down the both plants, a process that usually takes 20 years. Entergy is short \$90 million to close Vermont Yankee that is estimated to cost a total of about \$560 million. If the billion dollar utility company wants to close Indian Point 2 and 3, they are currently \$500 million short of the \$1.5 billion price tag.

*Abby Luby is a Westchester based, freelance journalist who writes local news, about environmental issues, art, entertainment and food. Her debut novel, “Nuclear Romance” was recently published. Visit the book’s website, <http://nuclearromance.wordpress.com/>.*

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