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## **US : Anti-nuclear group : Defective parts warrant shutdown of Millstone, other plants**

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A Maryland-based anti-nuclear advocacy group is calling for the immediate shutdown of 19 reactors around the country, including Unit 2 at the Millstone Power Station in Waterford, until federal inspectors verify the safety of some key components.

Beyond Nuclear announced Thursday that it is preparing to submit an emergency enforcement petition with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission demanding shutdowns of 19 reactors at 11 sites that have potentially defective parts made by AREVA, a French company.

Flaws found in the manufacturing processes at AREVA's Le Creusot Forge have prompted the shutdown of 20 plants with AREVA components in France, but the NRC has thus far not taken any action at U.S. plants with AREVA parts, said Paul Gunter, director of the reactor oversight project for Beyond Nuclear.

"Half the reactors in France are shut down because of these parts, and nothing is happening in the U.S., and that's why we're taking these actions," he said. "The operating licenses of these plants should be suspended until safe operations can be affirmed."

In France, independent experts who first raised concerns about the parts said the metals used in AREVA pressurizers are defective and could be prone to catastrophic failure. The pressurizer is a key component in the reactor coolant system.

Concerns about the AREVA pressurizers were brought to the attention of the NRC by the international environmental activist organization Greenpeace earlier this year. In October, the NRC said it was evaluating AREVA equipment in this country and continuing to monitor tests and analysis by the company.

On Thursday, NRC spokesman David McIntyre said the agency is “following the French regulator’s investigation of the documentation issues at Areva’s Creusot Forge facility.”

“At this time there are no indications of safety concerns for any U.S. plants,” he said. “Therefore there is no need for the NRC to take immediate regulatory actions. Should the inquiry reveal any safety concerns, the NRC would take appropriate action.”

He added that “for proprietary reasons,” the agency will not release additional information. He directed specific questions about equipment at Millstone to plant owner Dominion.

**In addition to preparing the emergency petition, Beyond Nuclear on Thursday filed a Freedom of Information request for all NRC correspondence pertaining to AREVA parts.**

Ken Holt, spokesman for Millstone, said in October that Dominion was aware of the issues with AREVA components in France, but determined that the AREVA pressurizer in Unit 2 is a different type than the one used in reactors in that country. Unit 3, the other operating reactor at Millstone, does not have an AREVA pressurizer.

Dominion has been in contact with AREVA about the part and has verified through its own inspections and routine surveillance that there are no issues with the pressurizer, Holt said.

“Nothing has changed since October regarding the pressurizer,” he said. “We’re confident the pressurizer is fully operational and that it will continue to be through the life of the plant. We have reviewed the paperwork from AREVA and we have no concerns regarding the pressurizer. It undergoes routine surveillance and is inspected regularly to ensure it remains in an operational state.”

He said Beyond Nuclear’s call for an immediate shutdown of plants with AREVA parts is unwarranted.

After the emergency petition is filed, the NRC will convene a panel of eight to 12 agency technicians, engineers and attorneys to hear arguments of the petitioners. A top official of the NRC would issue a decision “within six weeks to several months,” Gunter said.

In its petition, Beyond Nuclear will call on the NRC to release the full list of all U.S. power plants with potentially defective parts, and to inform the communities that host the plants about the risks.

In addition to the pressurizers, the defective parts include reactor pressure vessels, replacement reactor pressure closure heads and replacement steam generators, Beyond Nuclear said in a news release. The group said the NRC should shut down all reactors with the potentially defective parts until it “can provide assurances that all potentially defective parts do not pose a major accident or meltdown risk during operations.”

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