

BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

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LEAGUE CHALLENGES DOMINION'S NEW REACTOR DESIGN

Yesterday the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League filed a new legal challenge opposing Dominion's plans for a third nuclear reactor at its North Anna plant. The group objects to the company's recent change of nuclear reactor technology for North Anna Unit 3. The League called upon the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to require Dominion to re-start its application process from the beginning.

The brief filed with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Atomic Safety and Licensing Board states: "The mid-stream change of nuclear reactor technology for North Anna Unit 3 subverts the letter and intent of federal regulations for the licensing of a new nuclear power plant and deprives the interested public of its rightful opportunity to review and comment on the proceedings."

Lou Zeller, representative for the League, said, "Dominion's switching of reactor technology is like altering the foundation after the walls are up." He said that the switch this late in licensing the plant would make it difficult to regulate. Zeller added, "The Commission may lack the regulatory duck tape to piece it together." He drew a comparison of the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission with the Interior Department's Minerals Management Service, the agency which oversees offshore oil drilling and which became too accommodating to its licensees.

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Esse quam videre

Dominion and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff now have twenty-five days to respond before the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board judges decide on how to proceed. The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League filed its initial challenge to North Anna Unit 3 in 2008.

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