

Back home

Boston.com home

Go!

today's date

- Regional news**
[All Northeast](#)
[Massachusetts](#)
[New Hampshire](#)
[Rhode Island](#)
[Maine](#)
[Vermont](#)
[Connecticut](#)
[New York](#)

- More wires**
[Sports](#)
[Business](#)
[Technology](#)
[Washington](#)
[Nation](#)
[World](#)

[[Send this story to a friend](#) | [Easy-print version](#)]

Dean seeks more money for nuclear emergency prep; auditor says not enough

By David Gram, Associated Press, 1/22/2002 18:42

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) Gov. Howard Dean said Tuesday he would ask the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant to double the \$400,000 it pays each year to support state and local preparations for an emergency at the plant.

Less than two hours later, the state auditor of accounts, Elizabeth Ready, released a report saying that even the \$800,000 sought by Dean would not be enough.

Dean told lawmakers in his annual budget address that Vermont should "recognize that more can be done to anticipate an emergency associated with the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant. ... Vermont and the communities surrounding Vermont Yankee must have more resources to cover these costs."

A Vermont Yankee spokesman agreed more funding was needed, but noted that all the money the plant pays for emergency preparedness is recouped from utility ratepayers.

"I don't think there's any question that the (emergency response) fund needs to be higher," said Vermont Yankee spokesman Brian Cosgrove. "I don't know whether \$800,000 is the magic number of not."

Deputy Administration Secretary Glenn Gershaneck called the \$800,000 figure a "placeholder," in the budget, which likely would be adjusted after an audit currently under way is completed.

Both Gershaneck and Cosgrove disagreed with a major recommendation in Ready's report: that how much is needed for emergency preparedness around Vermont Yankee be hashed out each year before the state's utility regulation panel, the Public Service Board.

Cosgrove said such a process would be cumbersome; Gershaneck wrote to Ready that the administration wasn't ready to cede its control over spending on emergency planning. "We disagree with the recommendation for the Public Service Board to validate annually the administration's determination of funds needed from the fund," he wrote.

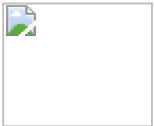
After Dean raised the emergency preparedness issue in his budget speech, Ready responded by providing a copy of a report that she had planned to send to the printers on Tuesday.

The report quoted state officials involved in emergency planning as saying they and the towns surrounding Vermont's lone nuclear plant will spend about \$1.2 million in the coming fiscal year on items ranging from training to emergency radios.

Ready pointed to what she said were severe shortfalls in existing state agency budgets for emergency preparedness. She cited Health Department documents saying about 42 staff people would be required in a nuclear emergency. It said the number "historically trained and paid for by the fund (is) 11."

It added that one Health Department employee had been assigned three different tasks in an emergency. "These separate roles placed him in different locations with different duties simultaneously in the event that the full (emergency) plan had to be implemented."

[[Send this story to a friend](#) | [Easy-print version](#)]



© [Copyright](#) 2002 Boston Globe Electronic Publishing Inc.

[| Advertise](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Privacy policy](#) |