

## *Lincoln County News – Newcastle, Maine*

### **Local Scrutiny Convinces Spanish Firm To Beef Up Maine Yankee Security**

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By Greg Foster

Iberdrola, the Spanish energy giant that purchased Central Maine Power's parent company recently, has settled with Friends of the Coast for provisions affecting the spent nuclear fuel facility in Wiscasset.

An intervener in the final proceedings before the state Public Utilities Commission (PUC), Friends of the Coast, a watchdog group familiar to those who followed the decommissioning of Maine Yankee in Wiscasset, managed an agreement to include stipulations before PUC final approval of the purchase Jan. 23.

In an order issued Feb. 7, the PUC approved proposed stipulations from Friends of the Coast and other interveners, including continued support for Maine Yankee funding of state oversight for the nuclear waste site at present levels.

The decision represents a victory over a previous settlement with the state that outlined a gradual reduction of funds over time.

"We intervened because we wanted to be certain the new owners were locally and positively engaged as corporate citizens responsive to local concerns," said Ray Shadis of the Friends of the Coast. "These agreements are a bold and significant step in that direction."

Previously state Rep. Seth Berry (D-Bowdoinham) had introduced proposed legislation for continued support at the current level, but it failed. Friends of the Coast expect the legislation to be reintroduced with CMP support the next time.

Iberdrola and CMP have agreed to meet periodically with the advocacy group to review safety and security at the storage site over the next five years, according to Shadis.

Another stipulation concerns the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office bid for 24-hour surveillance equipment that would give advance warning of any intrusion at the waste site perimeter.

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"Friends of the Coast was instrumental in giving public scrutiny to the 1996 Maine Yankee independent safety assessment forcing the nation's strictest radiological cleanup standards, providing quality assurance to the decommissioning, and enhanced protections in the waste storage site," Shadis said. "We have yet to drop our guard."

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CMP owns 38 percent of Maine Yankee, but Maine Yankee's board has not yet reviewed the stipulations, according to Maine Yankee spokesman Eric Howes.

Howes expects the Maine Yankee board to review the stipulations and their impact on its operation of the storage facility. "The Maine Yankee board of directors will give us direction as far as our position," he said this week.

CMP spokesman John Carroll explained the process of reaching what the utilities industry terms stipulation, which he said come out the purchase agreement that intervenors sign.

Iberdrola's acquisition of Energy East is its first utility purchase in the United States. It includes CMP's subsidiary Maine Natural Gas.