

# Vermont Environmental Report

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE VERMONT NATURAL RESOURCES COUNCIL, A NON-PROFIT, CITIZENS' CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION, SUPPORTED BY MEMBERSHIP DUES AND CONTRIBUTIONS. VNRC, 26 STATE STREET, MONTPELIER, VERMONT, 05602. (802) 223-2328. CHAIRMAN: DAVID R. MARVIN; EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: SEWARD WEBER; EDITOR: NAT FROTHINGHAM.

## NUCLEAR POWER: The Achilles Heel WHAT TO DO WITH THE WASTES??

*The nuclear issue in Vermont is alive with controversy once again. These are just some of the developments.*

- *In November, 1976, the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation filed a petition with the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) asking to "increase the capacity for storage of spent fuel assemblies in phases from 600 fuel assemblies to 2000 fuel assemblies at Yankee Station."*
- *On January 7, 1977, the State of Vermont filed a petition with the NRC asking to intervene in the Vermont Yankee application proceeding. Three public interest environmental groups have also filed for intervenor status on the Vermont Yankee application proceeding.*
- *On February 8, 1977, over 50 members of the Vermont House introduced H.261 that would require legislative approval before a nuclear waste storage or re-processing facility could be built in Vermont. While H.261 does not affect the Vermont Yankee application currently under review by the NRC, it does clearly speak to the problems of atomic waste storage and disposal.*
- *On Town Meeting Day, March 1st, 1977, at least 23 towns will have referendums on the question of nuclear power. These towns will vote on the question of whether or not to exclude the construction and operation of commercial nuclear plants and the transportation, storage and disposal of wastes from commercial reactors on and in the land, the air and the water of these towns.*

For the promoters of nuclear power, there is no more vexing problem, for its opponents, no greater curse, than the question of what to do with the long-lived radioactive wastes from nuclear power plants. Some of these wastes must be contained for hundreds of thousands of years, -- for 100 times as long as all recorded human history.

A small part of this unfolding drama over the storage and disposal of atomic wastes, a theatre piece of international dimensions, is now being acted out in Vermont as the result of two almost simultaneous developments.

The first development is the November, 1976 appli-