

# Group calling for shutdown of Beaver Valley nuclear plant

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SHIPPINGPORT -- An advocacy group opposed to nuclear energy is calling for the shutdown of the Beaver Valley Nuclear Power Station amid fears of potentially defective parts from a French company. Beyond Nuclear, a suburban Washington, D.C., group “working for a world free from nuclear power and nuclear weapons,” has called for the closing after concerns surfaced regarding a French company that supplied parts to 17 domestic nuclear power plants.

The company, called Areva, is under fire for “potentially defective safety-related components and potentially falsified ... documentation” coming from its Le Creusot Forge facility, Beyond Nuclear said in a report.

In the report, Beyond Nuclear said it is “impossible to guarantee the reliability and quality of reactor components if the content of quality control and quality assurance documents cannot be verified and trusted.”

Areva is under investigation from France’s nuclear watchdog agency called the Autorité de Sûreté Nucléaire, according to the domestic Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The NRC also said it is reviewing a petition submitted by Beyond Nuclear that calls for the shutdown of the affected plants.

FirstEnergy spokeswoman Jennifer Young confirmed Wednesday that Beaver Valley Unit 1 does have parts that were manufactured at the Areva facility in France. Those parts are located in the replacement reactor head and steam generators at Beaver Valley.

In addition, Nuclear Regulatory Commission spokesman Neil Sheehan confirmed that Unit 2 at Beaver Valley “has components made at the forge, but (FirstEnergy) has decided to delay their installation for at least a few years.”

Sheehan said the NRC is investigating the matter but, at the moment, sufficient evidence does not exist to warrant further action.

“Because there are no immediate safety concerns, there is no justification for the NRC to order plants to shut down and inspect components, as some groups have suggested,” Sheehan said. “Should new information raise a specific safety concern, the agency will take appropriate action.”

For FirstEnergy’s part, Young said Beaver Valley Unit 1 has been using parts from the France forge for more than a decade, and the company has not been notified of any potential concerns from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

“We have not been notified that any components at Beaver Valley associated with the Creusot Forge are affected by safety, technical or quality challenges,” Young said. “We will take appropriate actions if they are recommended in the future.”

In addition, Young said the plant’s rigorous and thorough testing and inspection protocols “are designed to identify any material issues well before safety is challenged.”

Sheehan said the NRC is in frequent contact with Areva officials, and the agency is “prepared to take action should ongoing reviews identify any issues warranting immediate attention.”