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# Radioactive Leak Is Fixed at Vermont Plant

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Technicians have found and fixed two holes in an underground pipe that were allowing radioactive tritium to flow into the groundwater at the Vermont Yankee nuclear reactor, the plant's owner, [Entergy](#), said Thursday.

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The leak did not contaminate any drinking water, but it did cause a political uproar in Vermont; the State Senate overwhelmingly approved a measure last month that will force the plant to shut in 2012.

Reversal is possible, but sentiment in Vermont is running firmly against the plant, which is in Vernon, near the Massachusetts border, because Entergy executives had assured state officials who asked about the potential for underground leaks that it had no pipes that could do so.

The source of the leak has been clear for weeks, and the company gave daily updates during the two and a half months of repair work. The Vermont Department of Health has also issued frequent [updates](#).

On Thursday, an executive vice president of Entergy, Mark Savoff, promised that the company would become an industry leader in "tritium leak prevention, detection and mitigation." The company also owns the [Indian Point](#) reactors in New York, which also had a tritium leak, as well as the failure of an underground pipe that carried clean water.

At Vermont Yankee, technicians found two holes in a pipe that carries radioactive gases from the reactor to a waste processing system. The pipe is buried in an underground concrete casing equipped with a drain, so that leaked liquids would be captured. But over the years, the drain became clogged with mud and debris, the company said, and the tritium seeped through an unsealed joint.

Tritium is a radioactive form of hydrogen, and at Vermont Yankee, it is incorporated into water molecules. Thus, it cannot be filtered out.

Entergy will pump some contaminated water out of the soil, purify it and use it within the plant, the company said; it will also remove about 150 cubic feet of contaminated soil and send it to a licensed dump.

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