

projects prior to the firming up of the sponsors' obligations, the municipals are at a distinct competitive disadvantage in trying to get a share in these bulk power sources. One obvious reason that the municipals seek admission to the industry's regional planning activities is that in the future they want to participate in the consideration of nuclear power and other cooperative ventures from an early stage. (The Massachusetts municipals are currently pursuing their attempt to get admitted into the Vermont Yankee project before the Securities and Exchange Commission (Docket No. 70-4435) and the Atomic Energy Commission (Docket No. 50-217) and into the Maine Yankee project before the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (Docket No. 15337)).

In general, the business advantage to a utility -- whether publicly owned or investor-owned -- of participating in regional planning activities is that it is in a better position to know what opportunities are available to it and to propose a course of action which will serve its needs. To use a simple illustration, a utility which is privy to regional planning will usually have a better knowledge of where power might be bought and where it might be sold. Or if a utility knows of plans for an emerging regional grid, it will be able to propose changes