

July 13, 2000

The Honorable Benjamin A. Gilman
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-3220

Dear Congressman Gilman:

This letter is in response to your June 13, 2000, letter regarding notifications associated with a recent plant shutdown at Indian Point Unit 3, as well as steam generator integrity issues at Indian Point Unit 2. You requested that an additional public meeting be held to provide a forum for public input on issues at Indian Point.

First, regarding the event at Indian Point Unit 3 on June 9, the unexpected shutdown was caused by a defective wire associated with the plant's output generator protective relay circuitry. There were no malfunctions involving the reactor or associated systems, and all shutdown systems operated as expected. The defective wire was replaced and the plant was safely restarted. Automatic shutdowns such as this one are preventive in nature and are part of the basic power plant design.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) regulations require that licensees notify us of certain events, including unexpected plant shutdowns such as the one that occurred at Indian Point 3. The NRC reviews and assesses such events at nuclear power plants on a continuing basis, including consideration of the potential health and safety effects on the public. Given the comparatively benign nature of the event on June 9, we determined that no special notifications were warranted.

As a service to the public, however, the NRC makes available on a daily basis nuclear power plant status reports and event briefings. Events such as the plant shutdown at Indian Point 3 are included. This information is available through the "News and Information" section of the NRC Web-site (www.nrc.gov).

Your letter also raises concerns about Indian Point Unit 2. Although Consolidated Edison (ConEd) has operated Indian Point Unit 2 safely, the NRC shares your concern about events at the plant and recognizes the importance of our continued close attention to the corrective actions being taken by ConEd to address identified performance problems.

The NRC is conducting a comprehensive review of ConEd's proposal to allow plant startup and operation with the existing steam generators for a limited period of time. In accordance with its operating license, ConEd must obtain NRC approval prior to plant startup. The NRC staff has been extensively engaged on steam generator tube integrity activities at Indian Point 2 since the February 2000 event. Staff activities have included direct observation of steam generator

inspections performed by ConEd and detailed review of inspection data and results as they relate to steam generator tube integrity. NRC approval of future operation of the plant with the existing steam generators will not occur unless we conclude that these generators meet technical standards and will adequately protect public health and safety.

I am pleased that you attended the public meeting on June 25 and stated your views on developments at Indian Point 2. I hope that the meeting served the purpose of explaining to the public the status of NRC's review of Indian Point 2 activities and issues, including steam generator integrity. I know we benefitted from receiving public comments.

Please do not hesitate to call me at (301) 415-1750 if you have additional concerns in this matter.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Nils J. Diaz
Acting Chairman