

March 26, 2002

Ms. Kayla Cohen
241 Millwood Road
Chappaqua, NY 10514

Dear Ms. Cohen:

I am responding to your letter of January 18, 2002, to U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Chairman Richard A. Meserve. In your letter you expressed concern about the safety of the Indian Point Nuclear Generating Unit Nos. 2 and 3 in light of the September 11th terrorist attacks. You also expressed concern about the adequacy of the emergency preparedness plans for the area surrounding the plants.

We understand that many of our fellow citizens are concerned that a U.S. nuclear facility could be a target of future terrorist attacks. In view of the recent unprecedented events, Chairman Meserve, with the full support of the Commission, has directed the staff to undertake a thorough review of our security regulations and procedures, including the basic assumptions of our current programs. This review involves coordination with U.S. national security organizations. The NRC recently issued Orders to all commercial nuclear power plants to implement interim compensatory security measures for the high-level threat environment. Some of the requirements formalize a series of security measures that NRC licensees had already taken in response to advisories issued by the NRC, and others are security enhancements which have emerged from the Commission's ongoing security review.

In regard to your suggestion that the Indian Point units be converted to solar power, the NRC cannot direct the plants' owners to undertake such a conversion. If circumstances warrant, however, the NRC can order plants to cease operations. We cannot rule out the possibility of future terrorist attacks on the Indian Point units; however, we believe that these facilities can continue to operate safely. Nuclear power plants are inherently robust. Their design is based on defense-in-depth principles, and includes many features to protect public health and safety. Reinforced containment buildings and redundant safety systems would allow trained operators to prevent or limit the release of radioactive material in the unlikely event of a terrorist attack or other disaster. In light of the facility's defense-in-depth, the heightened security measures implemented in response to the events of September 11th, and the NRC's ongoing reevaluation of its safeguards regulations and programs, we do not consider the immediate closure of the Indian Point units to be necessary to provide adequate protection for the public health and safety.

In regard to your concerns about the adequacy of the emergency plan for the area surrounding the Indian Point plants, the State of New York, in late January 2002, issued its annual letter of certification to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). By this letter, the State informed FEMA that specific preparedness activities had been completed including training and updating of State and local plans; however, the updating of State and local plans is an ongoing activity. FEMA is currently evaluating your concern about the adequacy of the number of buses and bus drivers. We will inform you of the results of this evaluation.

K. Cohen

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I trust that this letter addresses your concerns. Thank you for writing to us about this important matter. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Elinor G. Adensam, Director
Project Directorate I
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

K. Cohen

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Sincerely,

/RA/

Elinor G. Adensam, Director
Project Directorate I
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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