

CORR: 00-0037

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## COMMISSION CORRESPONDENCE

### Correspondence Response Sheet

**Date:** March 9, 2000

**To:** Chairman Meserve  
Commissioner Dicus  
Commissioner Diaz ✓  
Commissioner McGaffigan  
Commissioner Merrifield

I concur, with attached edits.

  
Nils J. Diaz 3/9/00

**From:** Annette Vietti-Cook, Secretary

**Subject:** Letter to Sandra R. Galef, New York State Assembly,  
concerns the steam generators at Indian Point 2

**ACTION:** Please comment/concur and respond to the Office of the  
Secretary by:

**Time:** 4:00 p.m.  
**Day:** Thursday  
**Date:** March 9, 2000

**Comment:** RESPONSE ADVISES OF A MEETING TO BE HELD  
ON MARCH 14

**Contact:** William Ruland, EDO/RI  
610-337-5376

REC'D BY Entered in STARS Tracking System  Yes  No

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ORIGINAL



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Sandra R. Galef  
New York State Assembly  
Room 540, Legislative Office Building  
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Assemblywoman Galef:

This letter is in response to your February 18, 2000, letter in which you requested that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) conduct a timely thorough examination of ~~the past and current condition of~~ the steam generators at the Indian Point 2 (IP2) Nuclear Plant <sup>before any decision</sup> following the ~~steam generator tube failure on February 15, 2000.~~ <sup>it made to return IP2 to service.</sup> You also were concerned that local officials were not promptly informed of the Alert declared during the event.

The NRC formed an Augmented Inspection Team (AIT) at IP2 to determine what happened prior to, during and following the February 15, 2000, steam generator tube failure. As part of its review, the AIT will determine whether ConEd met its commitments for inspecting, maintaining, and monitoring steam generator tubes. In addition, the AIT will review ConEd's implementation of emergency plan notification requirements. We will provide you a copy of the AIT report as soon as it is completed.

In addition to the AIT review, the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) is conducting a review of the IP2 steam generators which will focus on steam generator inspections, problem identification, root cause analysis, and corrective actions. Through these efforts, NRC will review the results of the detailed examinations of the IP2 steam generators being performed by

ConEd. NRC met publicly with ConEd on March 1, 2000, to discuss steam generator inspections, recovery plans, restart criteria, and the replacement steam generators.

Operating experience to date has shown that significant steam generator tube leakage and tube failures have all involved only one steam generator tube at a time. As you observed, there have been some concerns raised about the probability and consequences of multiple steam generator tube failures. Studies conducted by the NRC staff to date indicate that the potential for multiple steam generator tube ruptures is low. Additional studies have shown that even in the event of multiple steam generator tube ruptures, the likelihood of core melt is very low.

*established safety*  
The NRC requirements for the operation of steam generators, which include limitations on steam generator tube leakage during plant operation. The measured leak rates prior to the event were well below plant technical specification limits. Commercial nuclear power industry experience to date has shown that steam generator leakage at the low levels noted at IP2 prior to the February 15, 2000, event is not considered predictive of a tube failure. However, as noted above, when the root cause of the steam generator tube failure at IP2 is understood, the NRC staff will review ConEd's corrective actions to ensure that those actions minimize the potential for recurrence.

NRC requirements are intended to ensure the structural and leakage integrity of steam generator tubes. NRC does not have requirements for the timing of steam generator replacements. Licensees, in this case ConEd, decide whether or not to replace their steam generators based on the increasing costs of inspections, repairs, and lost operating time to continue to meet NRC requirements.