

March 27, 2002

Ms. Nancy Nager  
Hastings-on-Hudson School District  
27 Farragut Avenue  
Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706

Dear Ms. Nager:

I am responding to your letter of January 28, 2002, to Mr. Richard Meserve, Chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), concerning emergency planning at the Indian Point Nuclear Generating Unit Nos. 2 and 3 (Indian Point). In your letter, you expressed concerns about the scope of the current evacuation plans and the preventive measures which would eliminate the risk of a nuclear accident caused by a terrorist attack or a serious malfunction.

We understand and recognize that many of our fellow citizens are concerned that a U.S. nuclear facility could be a target of future terrorist action. In view of the recent unprecedented events, Chairman Meserve, with the full support of the Commission, has directed the staff to undertake a top-to-bottom 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. As you may be aware, the State of New York's Office of Public Security (OPS) worked with various Federal and State agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to assess the long-term security needs at Indian Point. As a result, OPS prepared a report that provided several recommendations to enhance security. Many of the measures suggested in the report have been implemented by the licensee and others are currently under advisement.

In addition, 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 taken in response to advisories issued by the NRC, and others are security enhancements which have emerged from the Commission's ongoing top-to-bottom security review. The Commission decided to issue Orders because the generalized high-level threat environment has persisted longer than expected and, as a result, it is appropriate to maintain the security measures within the established regulatory framework. The details of specific additional security requirements are sensitive and will not be provided to the public, but they include such measures as additional personnel access controls; enhanced requirements for guard forces; increased stand-off distances for searches of vehicles approaching nuclear facilities; and heightened coordination with appropriate local, State, and Federal authorities.

Although we cannot rule out the possibility of future terrorist activity directed at one of our licensee sites before implementing any potential enhancements to our safeguards programs, 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. For example, reinforced containment buildings and redundant safety systems would aid trained operators in preventing or limiting the release of radioactive material in the unlikely event of a terrorist attack.

The NRC and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are the two Federal agencies responsible for evaluating emergency preparedness at and around nuclear power plants. NRC regulations require that comprehensive emergency plans be prepared and periodically exercised to assure that actions can and will be taken to notify and protect citizens in the vicinity of a nuclear facility. The NRC has responsibility for evaluating the onsite emergency planning and requires licensees to have detailed procedures for responding to events, making timely notifications to appropriate authorities, and providing accurate radiological information. Likewise, the Federal lead role in evaluating offsite (e.g., State and local government emergency preparedness activities that take place beyond the nuclear power plant boundaries) radiological emergency planning and preparedness activities rests with FEMA. The NRC relies on FEMA's findings in determining that there is reasonable assurance that adequate protective measures can and will be taken in the event of a radiological emergency.

FEMA has established the Radiological Emergency Preparedness Program to: (1) ensure that the public health and safety of citizens living around commercial nuclear power plants can be adequately protected in the event of a nuclear power plant accident and (2) inform and educate the public about radiological emergency preparedness. In accordance with a Presidential Directive and Federal mandates, FEMA issues policy and guidance to assist State and local governments in developing and implementing their radiological emergency response plans and procedures. In addition to coordinated nuclear facility, State, and local emergency response planning, Federal agencies also have plans in place to coordinate their response activities and share their resources in support of State and local officials during an emergency. Coordination activities include joint planning and training sessions and exercise participation.

Typically, the emergency preparedness plan for a nuclear power plant includes an area within a 10-mile radius around the plant. The facility's emergency response plan is discussed and agreed upon by the organization operating the power plant, by local and county emergency response officials, and by State emergency management officials.

In late January 2002, the State of New York issued its annual letter of certification to FEMA. By this letter, the State informs FEMA that specific preparedness activities have been completed including training and the updating of State and local plans. However, the updating of State and local plans is an ongoing activity. I would like to suggest that you visit the NRC's website at [www.nrc.gov/what-we-do/regulatory/emer-resp.html](http://www.nrc.gov/what-we-do/regulatory/emer-resp.html) for additional information about the roles of the Federal and State agencies in emergency preparedness. In addition, you may wish to contact the New York State Emergency Management Office and the Westchester County Office of Emergency Management, Department of Emergency Services, for details that may be useful to your school district.

N. Nager

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Thank you for your interest in these concerns of importance to your school district, the Nation, and nuclear power plant security. If you should have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at 301-415-1353 or Patrick Milano at 301-415-1457.

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

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

N. Nager

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Sincerely,

**/RA/**

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

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