

CORR: 01-0010

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COMMISSION CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence Response Sheet

Date: January 22, 2001

Approved w/ edits

To: Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz —
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield

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1.22.01

From: Annette Vietti-Cook, Secretary

Subject: Letter to Representative Sue W. Kelly concerns activities at Consolidated Edison's Indian Point 2 nuclear power station

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

Time: 1:30 p.m.

Day: Monday

Date: January 22, 2001

Comment:

Contact: Brian Holian, RG1/DRS
610-337-5128

Entered in STARS Tracking System Yes No

W/85



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Sue W. Kelly
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Kelly:

I am responding to your letter dated January 3, 2001, which raised concerns about activities at Consolidated Edison's Indian Point 2 nuclear power station. In particular, you raised concerns about leaks at Indian Point 2, and also requested the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to suspend operations at Indian Point 2 until safety issues have been addressed and resolved.

Consistent with our designation of Indian Point 2 as a plant warranting heightened scrutiny under our Reactor Oversight Program, we have been closely monitoring plant activities. We have conducted augmented inspections of Consolidated Edison's restart testing and power ascension program and have carefully assessed their handling of various equipment issues that have arisen during the restart process, such as the pressurizer relief valve leakage reported to the plant's pressurizer relief tank that you referred to in your letter. We have determined that this leakage, which by design is being retained by plant systems, is well below allowable NRC limits. This leakage is also well below levels that would affect ~~continuing safety valve function.~~ *the ability of the valve to continue to perform its safety function.* It is important to note that the high-pressure reactor coolant systems at all nuclear power plants experience a very small amount of leakage that is routinely captured and processed in a safe and controlled manner. Therefore, I can assure you that this leakage, poses no threat to public

health and safety of plant employees. Additionally, this leakage is fundamentally different from the leakage during the February steam generator tube failure. I understand that details of this leak were discussed in depth with you and your staff during a plant tour with Mr. Hubert Miller, Region I Administrator, on January 5, 2001. Another issue that has received press coverage and which you referenced in your letter, was a minor leak on a main boiler feedwater pump, which was from the secondary (non-radioactive) side of the plant. Upon discovery, Consolidated Edison took appropriate action to isolate the leak, repair the problem, and return the pump back to service. NRC regional and resident inspectors monitored Consolidated Edison's actions during this evolution and concluded that their actions were proper.

With respect to your request to suspend operation of the plant, the Commission continues to believe it would be inappropriate to issue an order to suspend operations at Indian Point 2, in light of the results of inspections to date and our ongoing oversight of licensee activities. Our inspections over the past several months have examined such things as safety system readiness, licensed operator training, corrective actions, and aspects of emergency preparedness. Reports of these inspections have been made publicly available. Further, as you know, we have initiated a significant, supplemental team inspection to provide additional insights into facility operations at Indian Point 2 which will inform the NRC's ongoing consideration in this regard. This inspection team is made up of over a dozen people from various NRC regional offices, NRC headquarters, and contractors. This inspection will consist of three weeks of on-site inspection activities.

The Commission is aware of the concerns in the community regarding problems the Indian Point 2 plant has experienced. ~~Additionally,~~ I want to assure you that should the NRC find in the future that the licensee is not complying with NRC requirements or not maintaining

and I believe we have taken actions to address these concerns

The Honorable Sue W. Kelly

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safe operations, the NRC will take appropriate action. If you have any further questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Meserve