

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: 09/25/03 EDO CONTROL: G20030553  
DOC DT: 09/12/03  
FINAL REPLY:

Representative Nita M. Lowey

TO:

Travers, EDO

FOR SIGNATURE OF : \*\* GRN \*\* CRC NO: 03-0594

Travers, EDO

DESC:

Repair of the Containment Sumps at the Indian  
Point Energy Center

ROUTING:

Travers  
Norry  
Paperiello  
Kane  
Collins  
Dean  
Burns/Cyr  
Miller, RI

DATE: 09/15/03

ASSIGNED TO: CONTACT:  
NRR Borchardt

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:



COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,  
AND EDUCATION

FOREIGN OPERATIONS,  
EXPORT FINANCING AND  
RELATED PROGRAMS



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**Rita M. Lowey**  
**Congress of the United States**  
**18th District, New York**

September 12, 2003

William D. Travers  
Executive Director for Operations  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Dear Dr. Travers:

I am writing to express my support for immediate repair of the containment sumps at the two nuclear reactors at the Indian Point Energy Center in Buchanan, New York. Deficiencies in the drainage pits at Indian Point 2 & 3 significantly increase the risk of damage to the reactor core in the event of a pipe rupture. Immediate upgrade of key safety systems at the two plants is imperative to protect the nearly 20 million people living within 50 miles of Indian Point.

A study recently commissioned by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) discovered that Indian Point's sump pump systems, designed to replenish cooling water in the event of an accident, are prone to clogging. Highly pressurized water, which flows through thousands of metal tubes, absorbs heat produced by reactor fuel. Cooler water flowing over these metal tubes is converted to steam, which drives the plants' turbines. The accidental rupture of these tubes, referred to as a loss of coolant accident (LOCA), could result in overheating of the fuel. Pipe rupture would also release a powerful jet of water, which would likely scour off pipe insulation and protective paint. This debris could clog both plants' sump pumps, which prevent water spilling from the pipes from flooding the containment building. The NRC concluded that Indian Point's drainage pits would almost certainly fail during a LOCA, dramatically increasing the risk of reactor core damage.

Postponing sump pump repairs until the next scheduled refueling date in 2005 would only court disaster. Unfortunately, NRC spokesmen have indicated that the low probability of a containment sump problem at Indian Point makes immediate correction unnecessary. This statement contradicts recent NRC actions. Indeed, the Commission recently issued First Energy a "Yellow" finding for a broken sump pump at its Davis Besse plant in Ohio, insisting on repair of the pumps before the plant could restart. Further, Consolidated Edison and the New York Power Authority reported to NRC only a few years ago that the chances of a loss of coolant accident at Indian Point 2 and 3 were 3.23E-01 per reactor-year (1 event every 3 years) and 2.02E-01 per reactor-year (1 event every 5 years), respectively.

My constituents cannot rest easy as long as safety deficiencies persist at Indian Point.  
Prudence demands swift correction of this problem.

Thank you in advance for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you  
soon.

Sincerely,

*Nita M. Lowey*  
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